

# **Horizon**

**A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART**

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## **WORKSHOP**

*by MASS-OBSERVATION*

## **BOSWELL'S PROGRESS—I**

*by PETER QUENNELL*

## **THE REPUTATION OF HENRY FUSELI**

*by RUTHVEN TODD*

## **THIS MORTAL COIL**

*by J. MACLAREN-ROSS*

## **FRAGMENT OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—VIII**

*by AUGUSTUS JOHN*

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# HORIZON

EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

Vol. VI No. 36 December 1942

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## COMMENT

WITH this Christmas Number HORIZON is three years old, a considerable age for a literary magazine. Too old in fact, too old at thirty-six! Think of all the magazines there will be after the war, the new writers, the new movements, the clean sweeps, the manifestos. And think how ridiculous HORIZON will look—no manifesto, no movements, a magazine which to defeat the call-up has learnt to appear without writers, which can see only in the blackout, which can comment only on disaster, or to maintain itself in a paper shortage. Not for us the economics of plenty, or the vulgarity, after the wilderness, of the promised land.

Fifty numbers, that is a maximum; at fifty HORIZON would be older than the *Yellow Book*, older than *Transition*, a living legend, like Shaw or Richard Le Gallienne or Wyndham Lewis. And at fifty, not to die, but to commit suicide—to publish one number in which everybody said what they really thought, and then be suppressed. Suppression is the deep unconscious goal of every magazine, its secret death-wish, and a magazine, to be good, should never be quite respectable. ‘Editors charged with Individualism! Police occupy premises. Bookstalls raided. State to take over HORIZON.’ . . . It will happen one day.

For the State will take over everything; the State everywhere has discovered its inexhaustible source of wealth—the working hours of the individuals who compose it. In some countries the discovery is a few years old, here it is only two—and woe betide us if we had not made it—but more woe still if we cannot unmake it, if we cannot break the tyranny of State, here and everywhere else, after the war, or never again will we have an hour to call our own. Being a small State-owned country we will have to work twice as hard to compete with the large State-owned countries, like some wretched Cock-house at school whose members never dare break their training. For the State-owned nation will have nothing in common with the dream of international Socialism, since it will always be in total competition with the others, and therefore have to ration and overwork its members while taxing both their work and their earnings. Its weapons will be propaganda, bureaucracy, and a secret police with every man his own informer. For every child born there will be one to spy on it—

for life. Our dossiers will open with the first words we say! And this will continue till a revolution is made and world Stakhanovism succumbs to the cry of 'Liberty, Inequality, and Inefficiency'.

The effects of State control are already apparent in art. We are becoming a nation of culture-diffusionists. Culture-diffusion is not art. We are not making a true art. The appreciation of art is spreading everywhere, education has taken wings, we are at last getting a well-informed inquisitive public. But war-artists are not art, the Brains Trust is not art, journalism is not art, the B.B.C. is not art, all the Penguins, all the C.E.M.A. shows, all the A.B.C.A. lectures, all the discussion groups and M.O.I. films and pamphlets will avail nothing if we deny independence, leisure and privacy to the artist himself. We are turning all our writers into commentators until one day there will be nothing left for them to comment on. 'A great work by an Englishman,' wrote Hopkins, 'is like a great battle won by England. It is an unfading bay-tree.' How true that is today, and how tragic if *les lauriers sont coupés*.

HORIZON wishes all its readers as usual a Merry Christmas, especially our subscribers from Number 1, our good-tempered phalanx of unsuccessful contributors, some of whose names are better known to us now than the accepted, our few but valuable friends 'in high places', and our American counterparts, *Partisan Review*, more uncompromisingly intelligent than ever; *Decision*, which so unfortunately has ceased publication and the Gotham Book Mart; and also a Merry Christmas to those who read HORIZON in huts and tents, and wardrooms and messes, and in British institutes in Curaçao, Surinam, Bagdad, Teheran, Chungking, and in furthest Switzerland.

#### ABOUT THIS NUMBER

*Plus belle que les larmes* comes from Aragon's sequel to Crève-Cœur, *Les Yeux d'Elsa*, published by La Batonière, Neuchâtel, Switzerland. It is the poem referred to in the introduction to the *Horizon-La France Libre* edition of Crève-Cœur, and may interest subscribers to it.

Boswell's Progress is the first of three articles by Peter Quennell.

Ruthven Todd is at work on a study of English nineteenth-century romantic paintings.

# LOUIS ARAGON

## PLUS BELLE QUE LES LARMES

J'empêche en respirant certaines gens de vivre  
Je trouble leur sommeil d'on ne sait quel remords  
Il paraît qu'en rimant je débouche les cuivres  
Et que ça fait un bruit à réveiller les morts

Ah si l'écho des chars dans mes vers vous dérange  
S'il grince dans mes cieux d'étranges cris d'essieu  
C'est qu'à l'orgue l'orage a détruit la voix d'ange  
Et que je me souviens de Dunkerque Messieurs

C'est de très mauvais goût j'en conviens Mais qu'y faire  
Nous sommes quelques-uns de ce mauvais goût-là  
Qui gardons un reflet des flammes de l'enfer  
Que le faro du Nord à tout jamais saoula

Quand je parle d'amour mon amour vous irrite  
Si je crois qu'il fait beau vous me criez qu'il pleut  
Vous dites que mes prés ont trop de marguerites  
Trop d'étoiles ma nuit trop de bleu mon ciel bleu

Comme le carabin scrute le cœur qu'il ouvre  
Vous cherchez dans mes mots la paille de l'emoji  
N'ai-je pas tout perdu le Pont-Neuf et le Louvre  
Et ce n'est pas assez pour vous venger de moi

Vous pouvez condamner un poète au silence  
Et faire d'un oiseau du ciel un galérien  
Mais pour lui refuser le droit d'aimer la France  
Il vous faudrait savoir que vous n'y pouvez rien

La belle que voici va-t'en de porte en porte  
Apprendre si c'est moi qui t'avais oubliée  
Tes yeux ont les couleurs des gerbes que tu portes  
Le printemps d'autrefois fleurit ton tablier

Notre amour fut-il feint notre passion fausse  
Reconnaissez ce front ce ciel soudain troublé  
Par un regard profond comme parfois la Beauce  
Qu'illumine la zizanie au cœur des blés

N'a-t-elle pas ces bras que l'on voit aux statues  
 Au pays de la pierre où l'on fait le pain blond  
 Douce perfection par quoi se perpétue  
 L'ombre de Jean Racine à La Ferté-Milon

Le sourire de Reims à ses lèvres parfaites  
 Est comme le soleil à la fin d'un beau soir  
 Pour la damnation des saints et des prophètes  
 Ses cheveux de Champagne ont l'odeur du pressoir

Ingres de Montauban dessina cette épure  
 Le creux de son épaule où s'arrête altéré  
 Le long désir qui fait le trésor d'une eau purc  
 A travers le tamis des montagnes filtré

O Laure l'aurait-il aimée à ta semblance  
 Celle pour qui meurtrie aujourd'hui nous saignons  
 Ce Pétrarque inspiré comme le fer de lance  
 Par la biche échappée aux chasseurs d'Avignon

Appelez appelez pour calmer les fantômes  
 Le mirage doré de mille-et-un décors  
 De Saint-Jean-du-Désert aux caves de Brantôme  
 Du col de Roncevaux aux pentes du Vercors

Il y a dans le vent qui vient d'Arles des songes  
 Qui pour en parler haut sont trop près de mon cœur  
 Quand les marais jaunis d'Aunis et de Saintonge  
 Sont encore rayés par les chars des vainqueurs

Le grand tournoi des noms de villes et provinces  
 Jette un défi de fleurs à la comparaison  
 Qui se perd dans la trace amoureuse des princes  
 Confond dans leur objet le rêve et sa raison

O chaînes qui barraient le ciel et la Durance  
 O terre des bergers couleur de ses raisins  
 Et Manosque si douce à François roi de France  
 Qu'il écrivit son nom sur les murs sarrazins

Moins douce que tu n'es ma folle ma jalouse  
 Qui ne sais pas te reconnaître dans mes vers  
 Arrêtons-nous un peu sur le seuil de Naurouze  
 Où notre double sort hésite entre deux mers

Non tu veux repartir comme un chant qui s'obstine  
 Où t'en vas-tu Déjà passé le Mont Ventoux  
 C'est la Seine qui coule en bas et Lamartine  
 Rêve à la Madeleine entre des pommiers doux

## HORIZON

Femme vin généreux berceuse ou paysage  
 Je ne sais plus vraiment qui j'aime et qui je peins  
 Et si ces jambes d'or si ces fruits de corsage  
 Ne sont pas au couchant la Bretagne et ses pins

Gorgerin de blancheur où ma bouche mendie  
 Cidre et lait du bonheur Plénitude à dormir  
 Pour toi se crèveront secrète Normandie  
 Les soldats en exil aux ruines de Palmyre

Je ne sais plus vraiment où commencent les charmes  
 Il est des noms de chair comme les Andelys  
 L'image se renverse et nous montre ses larmes  
 Taisez-vous taisez-vous Ah Paris mon Paris

Lui qui sait des chansons et qui fait des colères  
 Qui n'a plus qu'aux lavoirs des drapeaux délavés  
 Métropole pareille à l'étoile polaire  
 Paris qui n'est Paris qu'arrachant ses pavés

Paris de nos malheurs Paris du Cours-la-Reine  
 Paris des Blancs-Manteaux Paris de Février  
 Du Faubourg Saint-Antoine aux coteaux de Suresnes  
 Paris plus déchirant qu'un cri de vitrier

Fuyons cette banlieue atroce où tout commence  
 Unie aube encore une aube et peut-être la vie  
 Mais l'Oise est sans roman la Marne sans romance  
 Dans le Valois désert il n'est plus de Sylvie

Créneaux de la mémoire ici nous accoudâmes  
 Nos désirs de vingt ans au ciel en porte-à-faux  
 Ce n'était pas l'amour mais le Chemin des Dames  
 Voyageur souviens-toi du Moulin de Laffaux

Tu marches à travers des poussières fameuses  
 Poursuivant devant toi de pays en pays  
 Dans la forêt d'Argonne et sur les Hauts-de-Meuse  
 L'orient d'une gloire immortelle et trahie

Comme un chevreuil blessé que le fuyard flétrisse  
 L'œil bleu des mares veille au sous-bois fléché d'or  
 Halte sur le chemin du banni vers la Suisse  
 Au pays de Courbet qu'aime la mandragore

Je t'ai perdue Alsace où quand le Rhin déborde  
 Des branches éblouis tombent droit les faisans  
 Où Werther à Noël pour un instant s'accorde  
 D'oublier sa douleur avec les paysans

L'orage qui sévit de Dunkerque à Port-Vendre  
 Couvrira-t-il toutes les voix que nous aimons  
 Nul ne pourrait chasser la légende et reprendre  
 La bauge de l'Ardenne aux quatre fils Aymon

Nul ne pourrait de nous chasser ce chant de flûte  
 Qui s'élève de siècle en siècle à nos gosiers  
 Les lauriers sont coupés mais il est d'autres luttes  
 Compagnons de la Marjolaine Et des rosiers

Dans les feuilles j'entends le galop d'une course  
 Arrête-toi fileuse Est-ce mon cœur trop plein  
 L'espoir parle à la nuit le langage des sources  
 Ou si c'est un cheval et si c'est Duguesclin

Qu'importe que je meure avant que se dessine  
 Le visage sacré s'il doit renaître un jour  
 Dansons ô mon enfant dansons la capucine  
 Ma patrie est la faim la misère et l'amour

*From 'Les Yeux d'Elsa'*

## UYSKRIGE

## MIDWINTER

Gone are the mountains, gone Il Gran Sasso, every peak, every cliff and outcrop, gaunt and black, craggy hard swallowed by the mist; and gone the fresh little mole mounds, no sooner heaped up than beaded with frost, here in the prison yard no bigger than my fist.

Gone too the country-roads like rods of ebony that cut these fields of snow into strict squares of black and white, rigid rectangles; and gone the tiny tracks of snails that looped themselves round a clean cobble-stone shining as beautiful and bright as jingling bangles, spooring the gutter's edge, crisscrossing the mess-kitchen steps, sparkling even in this crude half light with the sheen of spangles. And from the eaves the long, sharp-pointed icicle—winter's dagger with hilt and shaft silver-chased—stabbing the sight no longer dangles.

B

We have come to the dead-end of all our days, all our nights: these four blank walls a drab red brown by day, pitch black by night. There is no turning backward or forward from this.

This is our life, our death-in-life: this gloom, this ghostly pallor above each cot at noon, this cold at day's meridian, as cold as ice but burning, burning even as war's embrace, the blazing battle's bitter kiss.

Through the chinks, the cracks in the wide wooden door, the shattered window, the mist seeps. Its wisps cluster, drift and veer above each wooden bed.

The floor is of cement. There is no stove or fire. In two long rows we lie freezing under our blankets. In this grey whiteness lingering around us, drooping, drear,

from which all speech, all sound has fled,

no one speaks. All the old battles, desert scraps, dogfights, crashes on the desert's deck, swimming around in the cold, dark Med. before the slow red dawn, all the heroism and the gallantry, all the cowardice and the horror and the fear,

nothing, nothing has been left unsaid.

\*       \*       \*       \*

We have come to the end of all our small talk, our tether, our high hopes, ambitions. We have exhausted even the bickerings, the stupid quarrels, the sneer, the snarl. We have foregone all that we loved, cherished, held most dear

and all our books are read.

\*       \*       \*       \*

This is a dead world, a lost world and these are lost men, lost each in his own separate limbo, banished from his own memories, exiled even from himself. Here even dreams are dead.

*Prisoners of War Camp No. 78, Italy, 4 February 1942*

MASS-OBSERVATION

## WORKSHOP

FOLLOWING the publication of 'People in Production' (*Change* No. 3), special surveys have been carried out in individual *war* factories by Mass-Observation units.<sup>1</sup> Here is an extract from a report of one of these surveys. The part of the factory here described—the machine shop—is the place where most of the unskilled, monotonous work is done, largely by local conscript girls. The atmosphere of this shop, and the attitudes of the workers, are not characteristic of the whole factory, but they do illustrate something of the effects of long hours and monotonous work, unrelieved by any real understanding of the job, which is a vital, first priority one for all three Services.

### A DAY IN THE MACHINE SHOP

The machine shop stands by itself a little away from the main building. It occupies what was formerly the stables of an old country house; and in spite of clocking-in cards at the entrance and the hum of machinery within it still gives much more the impression of a stable than of a factory, with its rough walls, high windows, and dark cobwebby corners. The main part of the room is occupied by half a dozen benches, on which are mounted a number of small machines of various kinds. At the back are a few larger machines standing by themselves, and all round the walls are entrances into storerooms, rooms for special electrical work, and so on. All together about a hundred women are employed there, and a score or so of men.

At 8 a.m. the factory buzzer sounds, and a wild scramble starts at the entrance of the machine shop (an ordinary small wooden door, such as might lead into any private room). The night-workers are trying to clock out at exactly the same moment as the day-workers are clocking in; only one person can clock in or out at the same time, and as there is no system of queueing, or order of

<sup>1</sup> 'People in Production', reviewed in *HORIZON* for May 1942, is now available as a Penguin Special. Mass-Observation, run by Tom Harrisson from 82 Ladbroke Road, W.11, welcomes additional whole-time or part-time help from people of all sorts and in all places.

any kind, it is a case of all-against-all, in which the strongest or heaviest wins. Everyone is in a hurry—the day-workers because only three minutes' grace is allowed for clocking in after the buzzer goes, the night-workers simply because this is the moment they have been awaiting for the last twelve hours or so. The scrimmage, though ruthless, is fairly good-humoured, and a good deal of joking goes on among the groans and exclamations:

'Oh, my lord, my handbag's come open again. Thought I'd lost it that time! Oh, my lord, they'll be having the arms off of me before they're through!'

'Come on, sister. Give him a shove! You won't get nowhere here without you shove for it!'

'Oh, my foot!'

'You shouldn't leave it on the floor, then it wouldn't get trod on!' (General laugh from immediate neighbourhood.)

'O-ooh! This'll be the finish of me!'

Through it all, the voice of the doorkeeper can be heard occasionally, appealing plaintively to the night-workers:

'Let the young ladies clock in; stand back, please, and let the day-workers clock in.'

After getting through this there is a secondary scramble in the cloakroom, which is small for the number of people using it. The congestion would be even worse were it not for the fact that a number of girls hang about at the benches with their coats and scarves on, waiting for the crush to subside before they go in. There is no sense of hurry in the cloakroom at this hour (there are no definite penalties attached to being late on the bench, once one has actually clocked in to the building), and a lot of people take a quarter of an hour or more changing from coats into overalls; a great deal of talk and chatter goes on. Just for illustration, a verbatim record was made of the talk one Tuesday morning in the middle of February (a day chosen at random, for no apparent reason than its similarity to all the other days).

'Who's got my overall?' says a sulky, dark-haired girl, pushing about among the chaos of coats and overalls hanging up. 'This is my peg, I left it hanging there last night. Who's got it?'

'You're the mug, leaving anything in this dump. They'll pinch anything here. Pinch the milk out of your tea if you don't watch it!'

'Awful, isn't it, come to think of it. You can't put anything down.'

'Where's Edie this morning?'

'She wasn't on the bus, because he waited for her. At the corner. Don't know what's happened to her.'

'Perhaps she went to the dance last night and didn't wake up.'

'No, she didn't go to the dance, because Peggy was there, and she says she never saw her.'

'I thought she was going. She said she was going.'

'She said she would if Lil did, but I don't think Lil did go. She said she wasn't feeling like it, she didn't think she would, not getting home so late.'

'You can't go anywhere, can you; by the time you've had a wash and had your supper it's time for bed, isn't it?'

'That's right. It's wicked.'

'Well, all I know is, I wish it was eight o'clock now.'

'Oh, wouldn't it be lovely! If we was all dressing to go home now, and the buzzer just sounding!'

'I wish it was Saturday.'

'It's wishing our lives away, that's all we do here,' says a sad looking woman of about forty, with ginger hair growing grey.

'When I was in London, the time couldn't go slow enough for me. All the things I had to do, and now it's just wish, wish, wish. I wish it was all over; that's my wish. I'm about fed up with it.'

'O—ooh! Mind where you're going!'—as a new surge of arrivals sets everyone staggering once more.

'My stocking's gone again. I felt it go as I got on the bus. That's the third pair of stockings this week.'

'Awful, isn't it, with the coupons.'

'Look at my lunch!' A tall, fair-haired girl with heavily lip-sticked mouth holds up, with shouts of laughter, a sodden parcel of sandwiches, soaked by the rain.

'Look at Lil's lunch! You'd better eat them right away, Lil. They'll all come to pieces.'

'Blimey, is that your lunch, Lil?'

'Bit wet, aren't they, Lil?'

'What you going to do with them?'

'I'm going to eat 'em,' says Lil doggedly. 'But I'm not going to eat 'em now. They'll dry off.'

'Good thing she's not fussy,' said one of the girls, as Lil edges her way through the crowd. 'I wouldn't eat them, would you? not like that!'

At a quarter past eight there are still only about half the girls actually working at their machines (the official time for starting work is at eight o'clock, when the buzzer goes). Not till half-past is there anything approaching the whole lot working. There is a marked tendency every morning for the *elder* women to start work sooner than the *young* ones; the half-dozen or so women over forty who work in this shop are almost always at their machines before five past eight—a time when few of the other machines are in action.

There are various types of machine in the shop—drilling, tapping, etc.—each of them operated by one girl, sitting down. On almost all of them the work is very simple and monotonous, involving simply placing the part in position (it is usually impossible to do this wrong) and then the raising and lowering of a handle, or some such action. Usually one can work at one's own speed, letting the finished parts pile up on the bench or in a cardboard box until someone comes and takes them away; there is little feeling of hurry, or having one's pace dictated by the machine itself, as in continuous belt work. With a few exceptions, the work here involved neither mental nor physical effort of any kind. It is, in fact, just the type of work one hears educated people at war work exhibitions speak of with horror: 'I'd go crazy, doing that all day.' 'The monotony would kill me,' and so on. I was therefore particularly interested to find out what, in point of fact, it *does* feel like to be employed thus for hours at a stretch. To my surprise, I found that the boredom is far less than most people imagine. In fact, for at any rate the first couple of hours, the work is definitely pleasant, rather like knitting in a fairly plain pattern. After the rush and scramble of getting up and coming to work through the sleet of a winter morning, hurrying to get there in time, fighting to clock in at the door, it is restful and pleasant to sit down in a warm room, with nothing to do but fiddle with little bits of metal, and to know that for twelve hours one will not have to think or worry about anything at all.

This feeling is naturally strongest in a newcomer, but undoubtedly throughout the room there is an atmosphere of greater concentration on the job during the first hours of the morning than at any other time in the day. The amount of talking and idling is small, and there is little of the 'clock-watching' which forms one of the main features of the latter half of the day.

The first break is at ten o'clock for ten minutes. About half the people go up to the canteen for cheese rolls and cups of tea, and the rest stay around in the shop, knitting, eating sandwiches and talking. After that work continues till dinner time at 1 o'clock.

It is at a little before eleven that the first signs of slackening off begin to appear. People start going out to the cloakroom and hanging about for long periods, doing their hair, talking, eating the cakes and sandwiches they have brought for dinner and tea. The subject of what time it is (which by four in the afternoon, as we shall see, has become almost an obsession) begins to appear in conversations:

‘It’s five past eleven.’

‘That clock’s gone slow again. It’s nearly ten past. Jack, don’t you make it nearly ten past?’

‘Eh?’

‘It’s ten past eleven, isn’t it? Isn’t that clock slow?’

‘That’s not slow. That’s right.’

‘What, is it only five past?’

‘That’s right.’

‘Oh!’ Groans from both girls. ‘Only five past!’

The official time for dinner is one o'clock, and the official time for getting ready for it is five minutes to; but preparations start a long while before that. Between half-past twelve and five to one the cloakrooms are locked (the idea of this is to prevent people getting ready before the appointed time); but what happens as a result of this is that just before 12.30 a crowd of girls is to be found in the cloakroom washing their hands, preparatory to going back to the bench and doing nothing whatever for half-an-hour, so as not to get their hands dirty again before dinner. Another dodge for getting ready before time is the bucket of water in the welding room. It is filled from the water hose there, and the girls who work in that part of the room, and their friends, always wash their hands before time.

The real reasons for all this ingenuity being expended on circumventing an apparently reasonable rule is that there are only three basins in the cloakroom, and it is quite impossible for everyone to wash their black and oily hands in the five minutes allowed for it. If the rules were kept, it would mean that a lot of people would not get up to the canteen till a quarter past one or later; and the loss of even *one* minute of any of the breaks is

regarded as a tragedy. The anxiety not to miss a single second is always marked at dinner time. At a minute or so before one, people stand before the door poised like athletes for a race, waiting to rush at the first note of the buzzer. A certain amount of this anxiety is because being late means being at the end of the queue in the canteen; but it is certainly not all due to this, because people who bring their own sandwiches, and are therefore not concerned with the queue, are equally anxious to be in the front of the rush. On one occasion there was some kind of mistake, and the cloakroom did not get unlocked until a minute or so after one; the anger and dismay caused would have seemed to the outsider quite fantastic. At five to one, as usual, all the girls who had not managed to wangle washing their hands earlier gathered round the door of the cloakroom, and started as usual to yell for 'Popeye'—the little ginger-headed man responsible for locking and unlocking the doors. For the first minute or two his non-appearance was treated rather as a joke, and there was a lot of laughter among the shouting:

'Come on, Popeye! You mustn't keep a lady waiting!'

'Come on, Popeye!'

'What's he doing?'

'He's gone to bed. Shall we come and wake you up, Popeye?'

'He's scared. He's scared we'll [redacted] him. Come on, Popeye, we won't hurt you.'

'Popeye! Hurry, Popeye, we're waiting.'

But as the five minutes passed and one o'clock drew near, the joking ceased, and genuine anger took its place; when the buzzer actually sounded and he still hadn't appeared, such shrieks of despair and fury arose as I have rarely heard. When, some two minutes later, Popeye appeared, the situation was such that he remained at a distance, threw the key into the middle of the crowd and fled.

The dinner-hour is spent by most people in the canteen knitting, sewing, and occasionally reading. If it is fine, quite a number go for strolls in the grounds, or outside, up and down the road. Work starts again at two o'clock, and we have to clock in for it as at the beginning of the day. There is not the same clocking-in rush, however, as a lot of people drift in singly and go on with their knitting or whatever it is in little groups by the benches.

It is this stretch of time, from two o'clock till six (when there

is a half-hour break for tea) that nearly everyone dreads. There is often quite a lot of talk about it among the girls coming in at the end of the dinner-hour:

'Oh, I'm browned off! Think of it, till six o'clock!'

'It's wicked! Think of it in the summer, with the sun shining and all outside! It'll kill me.'

'I could lie down and go to sleep. I feel like that—you know.'

'It drags terrible, this time to six o'clock.'

'I wish it was six o'clock now.'

'I wish it was Friday.'

'Back to slavery!' (This is a phrase, quite often used, half jokingly, by the more C-class girls as they come back from dinner.)

And certainly, the time from two o'clock till six seems to go slowly. At about three o'clock one gets the feeling that the time will *never* pass; you think to yourself: After a whole hour, it will still be only four o'clock, and there will be two more hours to go after that. . . . A bewildering sense of helplessness comes over one; nothing one does *can* ever make a time as long as that pass. One gets the feeling that the time isn't passing on its own at all; that one has to drag the clock hand round the minutes by will-power. One begins to make idiotic bargains with oneself: If I drill a hundred of these holes without looking up, then by the time I do look up five minutes will have passed.

Between three and five in the afternoon more slacking and idling goes on than one would have thought *possible* in a wartime factory. Sometimes one can look along the bench and see not more than one girl in four actually working. But the others are rarely doing anything that could be definitely picked on by a foreman, such as knitting or reading. One will be sitting with her hand on the handle of her machine, as if just about to pull it down, and yet somehow not doing it; another will be patting her hair; another staring for the moment out of the window; another just settling down after a visit to the cloakroom, and so on.

It is at this hour that the activities known to the authorities as 'lavatory-mongering' are at their height. People drift out to the cloakroom, and stay there for half an hour or more, eating sandwiches, talking, reading, and often just doing nothing at all, and this in spite of the fact that the cloakroom is most uninviting, containing simply three basins, two lavatories, and a few square

feet of stone floor. There are no chairs or benches to sit on, not even a ledge on which to lay a bag or comb. Anything is welcome so long as it provides a change from sitting at the bench.

Now and then sporadic bursts of singing start in some part of the room or other and continue for a few minutes. It is usually a purely local affair, confined to the occupants of a few square yards of bench—nothing approaching community singing throughout the room ever develops. At this time of year the songs most frequently heard were 'Rose o' Day' and 'Roll out the Barrel'. Singing seemed to be a symptom of boredom more than exuberance, as it occurred mostly during the dead period of ordinary weekday afternoons (three to five), and only rarely on Saturdays, or at the end of a spell of work.

After five o'clock there is a marked recovery in both cheerfulness and concentration on the job. The feeling that a break (tea at six o'clock) is in sight has a definitely stimulating effect. One feels that the worst is over, because the time after tea, from half-past six to eight, seems, for some reason, to fly past at extraordinary speed. Everyone feels this; it was remarked spontaneously by a variety of girls even before I noticed it myself. On my very first day at tea, the girl opposite said consolingly:

'You'll be all right now; the time goes ever so quick after tea.'

'That's right,' said her friend. 'It goes lovely after tea. Funny, isn't it? It never drags, not after teatime.'

It was quite true, I found; and it never failed. Sometimes after a particularly long afternoon I used to feel sure that *this* time it would go slowly after tea too. But somehow it never did. Eight o'clock always arrived as something of a surprise, just as one was feeling (for the first time since ten in the morning) that one wouldn't mind going on for another hour or so.

For clocking out in the evening there is some attempt at a queue instead of a mere scramble. People line up round the wall of the room in something approaching the order in which they were ready, though the ruling is very loose, and some may slip in near the front without arousing much protest at the end of this twelve-hour day, in which perhaps a third of its time is really worked.

#### THE MACHINE SHOP GIRLS

It will be well now to give some kind of picture of the girls and

women employed here; of their characters, homes and background. The majority of them are D-class country girls, with no experience whatever of industrial work, or indeed of any organized work in a community. A large proportion of them were domestic servants before they came here. A few had done no work of any kind other than housework in their own homes.

But perhaps better than generalizations, a few sketches of some typical machine-shop workers will illustrate the salient points.

#### I. HILDA

Hilda is a heavy, plain girl of about twenty-eight. She has a large pasty face, glasses, and dark hair cut in a bob and drawn off her face with a slide, like a schoolgirl. Her home is in a neighbouring village, where her people keep a public-house, and until this year she worked as a domestic servant in a house nearby. She was registered with the twenty-eight's, and put into this factory by the Ministry of Labour, and she accepts the situation with placid indifference. She is working on one of the hand-presses on the back bench of the machine shop, and is one of the few who never seem to get bored with the job. She sits there, stolidly pushing the handle round hour after hour, looking rather vacantly in front of her. She says she 'doesn't mind' the work here, just as she 'didn't mind' her former job as a domestic servant, and has no further views about either of them. Her chief interest in life at the moment is her knitting. She and her mother belong to a knitting party in the village, and between them they are knitting a scarf for the Merchant Navy. Every day Hilda brings it to work with her and knits slowly but eagerly through all the breaks—she is not one of those who get on with their knitting under the bench or out in the cloakroom during working hours. She always tries to get ten rows done during the day, because she and her mother have worked out that if she does ten rows at work every day, and then brings it home for her mother to do a few more in the evening, they will get it done in time for Easter. Only on Mondays is she at a loss, and sits doing nothing during the breaks, because Monday is the day when the working party meets in the afternoon, and Hilda's mother likes to have the scarf to take to it.

She does not feel the lack of leisure as many of the girls do. She says:

'Some of them grumble, but I don't mind. I've got nothing

to do weekends, my mother sees to everything, she does my mending and all. I just do a bit of knitting, or I might go out for a walk Sunday afternoon. Sometimes my mum goes to church mornings, and then I might go with her.'

She is as phlegmatic about her food as about everything else. Every day she brings a tin of sandwiches prepared by her mother and eats stolidly through them—eight for dinner and four for tea—without seeming much aware of what she is eating. On two occasions I heard a neighbour ask her what was in them, and both times the answer was: 'I don't know. My mum does them.' She does not, like most of the girls, draw on them for odd snacks during working hours.

She has no special friend, but is as good natured as she is stupid, and is willing to talk to anyone who talks to her, making no difference in her manner in talking to people she has never seen before and talking to those who sit next her every day.

Altogether, she is one of the most contented of the machine-shop girls, and probably one of the best at her work.

## 2. PEGGY

Peggy is a lively, very good-looking girl of twenty, with lovely naturally wavy hair, which she wears loose on her shoulders. She is the eldest of a family of eight, and is always in boisterous high spirits, and keeps her section of the bench in a constant state of laughter and chatter. She started her working life as a cinema usherette—she describes it enthusiastically as 'a lovely job'—registered with the twenty's last spring, and since then appears to have been shifted around by the Ministry of Labour to a number of different factories, ending up with this one. She has disliked the work in all of them equally, but natural high spirits enable her to treat the whole thing as a huge joke, and she has a completely carefree, happy-go-lucky attitude towards conscription, work, penalties, and all the rest of it. On every possible evening she gets off at half-past five (this can be done officially on one night a week, but with a little guile, and complete disregard for risks and penalties of every kind, can really be done a great deal oftener) and goes off with a crowd of friends who, with much shrieking and laughing and waving, manage to secure lifts to their home village. Once home on these evenings she usually goes to some dance or other which involves staying up till two in the morning;

and as she has to be up at six to catch the bus to work, it is not surprising that she often fails to catch it, and thus has a day off. Threats and warnings from the authorities have no effect on her whatever, except to provide food for the entertainment of her neighbours on the bench. One Saturday morning she came rushing down from the office practically hysterical with laughter:

'I went up there, I knew they were going to tell me off about last night, and he was sitting there, all so solemn—like this—I was in fits, I couldn't hardly keep myself in. And he said to me (becomes inaudible in new fit of laughing)—he said to me I could be sent to prison next time. Sent to prison! (collapses with laughter). Me in prison picking—what is it?—me in prison —picking oakum! Can't you see me? Oh, I could have died! And him sitting there so solemn thinking he was scaring me! Oh! I nearly told him, I wouldn't mind going to prison. Where are we now, I wanted to ask him? Isn't this prison? Can't do what we like, can't go where we like. Oh, but you should have seen him!'

Story fades out in renewed bursts of laughter, in which by now everyone else is joining. The work itself bores her intensely, and her slapdash manner with the machine results in frequent breaking of drills—always an occasion for laughter, as her broken drills have become a standing joke.

In the same carefree spirit, she always wears nice dresses and stockings to work, regardless of the fact that among the dirt and oil of the machine-shop they are going to be ruined very quickly. Asked how she manages about coupons she says gaily:

'Oh, I don't know, I expect my brother will give me some. I'm not going to come in slops for anybody. I've always worn nice things to work, and *they* aren't going to stop me.'

### 3. EDITH

A very sweet, gentle girl of twenty-two, small and very pretty. She is married and has two babies, and only came to work here, she says 'To occupy my time, I was getting so miserable sitting home and worrying about Bill.' Bill is her husband, serving with the R.A.F. somewhere out East. She didn't know where he was, and only rarely heard from him, and was very worried that he might be taken prisoner by the Japanese at some point. She

thinks of and worries about him continually; carries photographs which she shows to us all at odd times, and talks constantly of him:

'When my husband was home he used to make such a fuss of us, me and my little girl. He'd bring us tea in bed and breakfast with toast before he went to work. I never used to get up for breakfast when he was home. And do you know, I never cleaned a window since I was married? He did all that. Wonderful in the house, he was; a wonderful husband. One of the best.'

Sometimes she speaks bitterly of the war which has caused their separation:

'I know we've got to win the war and all that, but it seems wicked, somehow, to take the fathers away like that. My little boy was only three months when his daddy went out. If anything should happen to him, he'll never know his daddy, and my little girl won't remember him. They ought to think a bit and send out the single fellows. It's not myself I'm thinking of, it's the children. If a child's lost one of its parents, it's lost everything.'

She begs us all to be sure and listen on March 27th, when Sandy Mac will be playing 'Home sweet Home again' for him. She says:

'Every time I listen in to those programmes I cry. You hear the women giving the messages to their husbands on Wednesday night, and they can't hardly get through it sometimes; you can hear they're crying.'

When I knew her she had been at the factory for about six weeks, and had decided to leave, as she found the hours too long and tiring; and though her sister was looking after the babies and the house for her she didn't like being away so long every day:

'I know she does everything for them, but I never seem to see my babies now. I miss it, dressing them and feeding them, and I sort of feel they'll forget I'm their mummy—you know what I mean. Start at six in the morning and getting back at nine, all I see of them is when they're asleep.'

She also says her husband doesn't know she is working:

'He'd have a fit if he knew I was here. He told me when he left, whatever I did I wasn't to go out to work in a factory. He was frightened it would be too much for me.'

She disliked the work, finding it dirtier and more monotonous than she had expected, but being by temperament very conscientious she did not do it badly or try to dodge it.

#### 4. WINNIE

Winnie is fifteen, though she might easily be taken for twenty, she is so tall and well developed. She is the youngest but one of a large family of sisters living locally, and she has worked in the factory for nearly a year. She does not seem to be a bad worker, but is invariably so tired and sleepy that it is hard to tell what her real potentialities are. The main reason for this is that she goes around with a young man of twenty-five or more, who takes her about to dances, socials, pictures, etc., in and outside the town practically every evening, and she rarely gets to bed before two in the morning. At her age this tells on her pretty heavily—a thing which he does not seem to realize, but treats her in every way as if she were a woman of his own age. He is the charge-hand on the bench where she works, so every evening she stays till eight o'clock (being under eighteen, she only has to stay till half-past five) so as to walk home with him—also to prevent him flirting with any of the other girls, which he usually does whenever she is not there.

One way and another, it is a very wearing life for her. Quite apart from the complication of her young man, she is much younger than most of the other girls and finds it difficult to get on with them. Most of them regard her as a rather silly, sulky child, and leave her to herself; and there is now the added fact that anyone who gets off with an authority of any kind—even a charge-hand—is usually looked on slightly askance by the others.

#### 5. MOLLY

A queer, old-fashioned looking little thing, with glasses and a rather high, childlike voice. The way she wears her clothes and her hair makes her look well over thirty, though she is only twenty-four. She is usually working on one of the drilling machines, and she is almost the only girl there who really and positively enjoys the work for its own sake, and not because of the wages, or companionship, or patriotism or anything else. Her particular job is just as dull as anyone else's, and yet she talks about it with real enthusiasm—she will rush up to you during a break and describe just what kind of part she is drilling now, how fast

she can do them, what the charge-hand said when he saw how many she had done:

'A lovely job I've got today,' she will say eagerly. 'Nice clean little brass parts, the drill goes through them lovely. Oh, I'm enjoying it. I did a thousand of them before eleven o'clock, and I called Les (the charge-hand) and showed him what I done, and he was ever so surprised.'

She never joins in the fierce rushes at dinner time and the end of the day. She usually stays at her machine until the buzzer has sounded, and the others are tearing for the canteen; she then goes in a leisurely way to the now empty cloakroom, and only goes up to the canteen when the rush and queue have subsided:

'I don't believe in all this rushing,' she says. 'You don't get things done any quicker. I get my dinner just as good as anyone else when I go quietly after they've all got theirs.'

Technically speaking, Molly is a conscript, called up with the twenty-four's, but really the manner of her coming here was much more that of a volunteer. It seems that when she registered she was in service, working as parlourmaid in a fair-sized country house. When it came to the registration of women, her employer was very anxious not to let her go:

'She sent for me, and she seemed very upset, and she said: "We can't let them take you, Molly," and she told me, "Tell them you've got bad eyesight," tell them this and tell them that. Well, I'd told her I wanted to go into war work, but she wouldn't listen; she said, "No, you tell them you've got bad eyesight; you'd never stand the strain. You're not strong enough, Molly," she told me. Well, then the Labour Exchange sent for me to come on the ninth, but my lady said to me, "Tell them you can't go so soon; get them to put it off." I told her I didn't think they'd do that, and so she said she'd 'phone them up. So she did, and when I went round there the girl said, "All right, they'd change it for me." But I told the girl, I said, Please, don't change it; I want to go into a factory, but Mrs. B. don't want me to go. I'd rather you didn't change it. So she wrote to Mrs. B. that they couldn't change it, I'd have to come. But she never told Mrs. B. I'd asked her to say so. It was very nice of her, wasn't it, don't you think so?'

'Mrs. B. was very angry, but she had to let me go. She kind

of guessed, I think, she knew I wanted to go into a factory. She said I'd let her down. She told me: "If you go to that factory you're a fool, and a big one. It will ruin your eyes, and you'll never stand it. You'll be sorry, I warn you. The wages may sound big, she told me, but by the time you're paid for your food and your lodgings you'll have less than you're getting here."

"So I wrote to her the other day, and I told her that for ruining my eyes, I do all my work here without looking at it. It was cleaning your silver, I said, ruined my eyes, not this work. I told her that I'm ever so happy here, and my board is tiny, and I spend an average of 9d. a day in the canteen. I'm putting away as much as I got all together with her. Now the cook's left too; she's gone to a factory in London, so I don't know how she'll manage."

Molly has no close friends in the factory or in the town, and she hardly ever goes out anywhere in the evening. She is billeted with an elderly landlady who specially asked for someone who was quiet, and would not go out much in the evenings. Molly prides herself on being this sort of person:

"I'm not one for rushing about like some of these girls. When I've finished work I like to go home and stop there. A real little home, that's where I asked them to put me. I can't understand why some of them want to be out all the time. You'd have thought they'd be tired, wouldn't you? Just rush in and change their dress and rush out again, every single night. It would kill me. But there's terrible rumours going round about some of them. They don't get in till two in the morning—that sort of thing."

The only social event she goes to is the Sunday afternoon tea run by her chapel. Again she has not made many friends here, but she seems to enjoy going. Apart from that, she spends her evenings writing letters, sewing and reading. Molly reads far more than most of the girls—she always brings a book to read in the canteen. She does not just read idly for pleasure, but has a real thought-out attitude towards it, and regards it as a worth while occupation. At the time of writing she is reading *A Tale of Two Cities*, and intends to have read the whole of Dickens by the end of the summer.

Though her appearance is rather dowdy and old-fashioned, she

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gives her clothes a lot of thought and planning, in a rather anxious, prim sort of way. Factory life has confronted her with a lot of new clothes problems, which she described one day as follows:

'It's so difficult, I can't decide what to do for the summer. I want to save my cotton dresses, I don't want to wear them for work, they'll get filthy. Are those slacks very hot? I did think of those—I think they're all right if you're on war work, don't you? I don't think they're nice for girls in the ordinary way. Or I might buy a skirt, and wear one of those dark shirt blouses with it. I want something to look nice coming home, it will be the sun out when we come out then, but I don't want to spoil my nice things at work. It's difficult. I won't go home looking like *anything*. I wouldn't go home looking like *that*, for instance (indicates girl walking in front of us dressed in shabby, shapeless coat, bare legs, broken shoes); but we won't mention any names.

'It's terrible the way the dirt gets through on to your clothes. I was ashamed of my petticoat this week, it was all quite black. I'm used to nice things, you know. I was brought up to think more of my underthings than my top ones. We used to put on all clean things, right the way down, every other day. My mother always used to say, suppose you were run over in the street and they took you to hospital, you wouldn't want to feel ashamed, would you? I always think of that when I put my clothes on in the morning.'

Although she seems to lead such a dull life, Molly is one of the happiest, most contented girls in the factory. She sums it up herself:

'I'm happy here because I put my heart into it. If I was always trying how little I could do like some of them, I'd be fed up like the rest of you. But I'm always like that. If it's only mending a stocking, I put my heart into it, and I can enjoy it. People laugh at me, they say, "Why don't you go out and enjoy yourself, Molly?" And I say I am enjoying myself. Whatever you see me doing, you know I'm enjoying it. That's my way.'

#### 6. SALLY

Sally is usually working on one of the hand-presses. She is a slow, very good-natured girl, with a round red face and dark hair.

When she is in the mood she can work efficiently and untiringly; but most of the time she is not in the mood at all, and dawdles most of the day. She will sit for minutes on end gazing round the room; or she will get up and wander over to a neighbour, flop down with her elbows on the neighbour's bench, and stay there talking until noticed by foreman or charge-hand. Then she will go back to her place, give the press a few turns, stop once more, and yawn, or look through her handbag, or merely fidget and play with the parts she is working on instead of putting them into the press. She is well liked by the other girls, because she is always in a good temper, always ready to talk to anybody whether they are friends of hers or not, and is generous with sweets, cigarettes, and anything else she may happen to possess.

She is an only child of poor country people, living in a cottage a mile or so away from the nearest bus. Thus she has half an hour's walk before she gets the bus, and has to leave the house at half-past six in the morning, and does not get back till half-past nine at night. Before she came here she worked in a greengrocer's shop, where she managed to have a good deal of time to herself:

'I loved that job. It was just the man and his wife running it and they were ever so good to me. If there wasn't much to do they used to say: "You go off home, Sally, we can manage," and I'd go out into the sunshine—oh, I did love it! Sometimes I'd been on my own there all day, and if there wasn't much doing I'd have my knitting, and just get on quietly, and do what there was to do. Sometimes it was very busy, Saturdays and that, but I didn't mind. We finished at five or half-past most afternoons, and I could meet my boy when he got back, and we'd go to the pictures, or anything like that.'

'It's wicked the hours we work here. I don't know any other factory works like we do. I know they don't where my boy works, they finish at half-past five like in peacetime. He's got nothing to do all the time till I get back, and I don't get in till half-past nine. Even if I miss my supper it doesn't give you much time, does it, not if you have to be up at six in the morning. I can't hardly get myself out of bed some mornings; they have to regular knock me about to get me up, and I always want a nap in the afternoon. I could lay my head down on the bench this minute, and not wake up till eight o'clock. I could, honest.'

Sally is twenty, but wasn't called up until December 1941 because her job was in a food shop. Her resentment at being sent here is increased by her parents, who tell her that the hours are too long, that it is ruining her health, and that it is wrong for women to be conscripted. Her mother also complains of missing Sally's help in the house—in which an airman and his wife are billeted. Sally herself dislikes the work as well as the long hours, and is counting the days until she can leave:

'The day the war ends I'll be the first out of this factory. It'll be a race, and I'll be the one to get to the outside of those gates the first.'

### PETER QUENNELL

## BOSWELL'S PROGRESS—I

WHEN the Ebony Cabinet at Malahide Castle gave up its papers, it added a new magnificently detailed self-portrait to the literature of Europe.\* James Boswell today stands beside Rousseau and not many others as a man who has left us a description of his personality (which rarely ceased to puzzle and disturb him) complete and minutely observed down to the very smallest wrinkle. There are few characters of the eighteenth, or indeed of any century, whom a sympathetic reader feels that he knows so well. And we know him well because his understanding of his own temperament was singularly imperfect, because he struggled all his life to achieve self-knowledge and the degree of self-mastery that would entitle him (he imagined) to rank as a useful, estimable and generally respected man.

He was none of these things. As he gained in age, he did not improve in virtue; and, though his literary performances won him

\* The eighteen volumes of the *Private Papers of James Boswell from Malahide Castle*, based on material acquired from Lord Talbot de Malahide by Lieut.-Colonel R. H. Islam, were privately printed more than a decade ago under the brilliant editorship, first of the late Geoffrey Scott and, subsequently, of Professor Pottle of Yale. They should be studied in conjunction with Professor Tinker's edition of Boswell's *Letters* (Clarendon Press, 1924).

the applause he coveted, he grew older among the smiles of his friends and the sneers or overt derision of chance acquaintances. He was a 'hopeless case': he knew it himself and was never resigned to the fact. Yet no man had started life with nobler ambitions, higher hopes or a belief more superabundant in his own abilities. Every year, every month almost, was marked by some resounding resolution, registered very often in dramatic circumstances—beneath the boughs of an ancient yew or under the echoing vault of a ruined Gothic chape!. He swore oaths, and drew up and signed papers, setting out the variety of weaknesses from which he intended to abstain or the fervent promises for future conduct that he hoped to keep. During the whole of his busy and agitated life there was not a single move that he did not accompany by some magniloquent resolve, and not a resolve that did not collapse before it had reached fruition, leaving Boswell baffled and disappointed yet curiously unembittered. His spirits, though easily cast down, were extraordinarily elastic. Any pleasant impression might change his mood—good talk, fashionable company, a beautifully appointed room: 'external conveniences and elegance (he wrote) render me not only happy but benevolent.' Novel sensations, a new friend, the unfolding of some ambitious exciting project, could lift him from the hell of hypochondria to aerial regions of youth and poetry.

No, his failures did not embitter him; and Boswell—in pleasant contrast to his early idol, Jean-Jacques Rousseau—did not impute his frequent mishaps to some diabolical cabal engineered against him by society. Boswell's misfortunes were Boswell's fault. True, his father, the renowned judge, was harsh, uncommunicative and unsympathetic. But he had been born (he liked to remind his friends) to a splendid and historic name, and was proud to assume the responsibilities of an ancient Scottish laird. Auchinleck, 'The Field of Stones', would one day be his. As its heir he could hold up his head among the proudest families of Europe. He was generally esteemed wherever he went; and though his success (he was prepared to admit) depended perhaps rather too much on the vein of extravagant buffoonery to which he was inclined to give free rein in his after-dinner conversation, the latter fault, he told himself, could easily be corrected. Meanwhile—this was in 1762, at the age of twenty-one—he embarked on a round of visits among guileless country relatives and, by way of intellectual

exercise, began the composition of his earliest journal, briefly entitled *Journal of my Jaunt*. In themselves the incidents he relates are sufficiently humdrum. Boswell jogs quietly from house to house, and at almost every resting-place he is remarkably well received. The country cousins are duly dazzled by the 'delicious fluency of declamation' he exhibits for their benefit. They gather round him, gaping, laughing, wondering: 'As a Cousin (Boswell notes) I had their Affection; as being very clever, their Admiration; and as Mr. Boswell of Auchinleck, their Respect. A noble Complication.'

Evidently (he saw himself) he was one of the '*finer souls*'. A man of the world too, who cut an impressive figure and was mistaken for an officer—pardonably, since he meant to purchase a commission in the Guards—when he attended the performance of a Punch-and-Judy show. There was an amusing adventure (the prototype of many subsequent adventures and misadventures) with the pretty servant at an inn, who first refused his advances and then, much to his chagrin, tiptoed into his room when he had fallen asleep, and feared to wake him. But these were trifles. After all, he was still in Scotland. Indeed, the whole jaunt was something of a dress rehearsal, and the curtain did not go up on the central drama until he found himself ambling down the road to London, a city he had visited once already on his trip to Newmarket. His newly engaged body servant rode behind him. Boswell was habited in 'a cocked hat, a brown wig, brown coat made in the court fashion, red vest, corduroy small clothes and long military boots'.

1763 was dawning, the most momentous year in Boswell's progress. No doubt seems to have existed in the young man's mind that the good society of London would receive him as cordially as he had been received in Edinburgh; nor was this prognostication entirely incorrect. For Boswell was born to achieve his wishes, yet behind the hope realised to find always another ambition mysteriously unfulfilled. He was the type of man (more common perhaps than might be at first supposed) who is perpetually in search of the 'real life' and the real essential personality that continue to elude him. 'When I get into the Guards (he had written) and am in real life. . . .' But it is obvious that, had Boswell achieved his military ambition, in the army he would have been as helplessly at the mercy of his impressions and

sensations (in which any sense of his own unchangeable identity was temporarily swallowed up) as Boswell at the bar or Boswell the place-hunter. He loved finery, material and intellectual—fine clothes, he said, had upon him the same exhilarating and enlivening effect as fine music; but once he had removed the coat and stripped off the waistcoat, he was often unhappy and ill at ease until he had hurried into some new form of spiritual fancy-dress. He lived, of course, intensely and excitedly; but he lived through others. Could he never be himself? But what *was* the self? He was everything and nothing, everywhere and nowhere, listening, agreeing, arguing and (whenever it was procurable) gulping down applause. In movement he existed; but left alone he was visited by a dreadful negation of feeling that reduced him to despair: He was no one. There was no real life—at least for the perplexed and unhappy Boswell. He was a wraith, the shadow of a shadow, the echo of a voice he had heard and memorised!

I am anticipating. Boswell in 1763, though occasionally troubled by attacks of hypochondria, had as much conceit as befitted a 'very clever man' and as much self-confidence as went with the character of 'Mr. Boswell of Auchinleck'. He had left Scotland, fired with the ambition of meeting Samuel Johnson (towards whose 'inflated Rotundity & tumified Latinity of Diction' he still adopted, nevertheless, a critical standpoint); and on Monday, May 16th, he achieved his end. The scene could not be better described than he has himself described it. The parlour of Davies' bookshop provided the background; and through its glass door Johnson's massive figure was seen majestically advancing. Tom Davies enjoyed the drama of the meeting he had been privileged to stage. But Boswell, though quick and sensitive, was extremely tactless; and in his opening gambit he managed to hit upon a pair of topics, both of which with Johnson were uncommonly dangerous ground. Rather illogically for a professed Jacobite and a pensioner of Lord Bute—but then, Johnson was very seldom logical—he was convinced that he despised and detested Scotsmen. Secondly, he resented any reference to the success of his former pupil, David Garrick. The ensuing dialogue, as Boswell remembered it, proceeded stormily; for, on being introduced, he had begged Davies to say nothing of the place he came from; and when Davies 'roguishly' exclaimed: 'from Scotland' "'Mr. Johnson'" (said I), "I do indeed

come from Scotland, but I cannot help it"; to which Johnson made the crushing rejoinder: 'That, Sir, I find, is what a very great many of your countrymen cannot help.' 'This stroke (continues the famous narrative) stunned me a good deal; and when we had sat down, I felt myself not a little embarrassed and apprehensive of what might come next. He then addressed himself to Davies: "What do you think of Garrick? He has refused me an order for the play for Miss Williams, because he knows the house will be full, and that an order would be worth three shillings." Eager to take any opening to get into conversation with him, I ventured to say, "O, Sir, I cannot think Mr. Garrick would grudge such a trifle to you." "Sir (said he, with a stern look), I have known David Garrick longer than you have done: and I know no right you have to talk to me on the subject."

Yet, whereas Johnson was a bully—often a bully in spite of himself—and as such had been quick to pounce on Boswell's deprecatory: 'I cannot help it', like a great many bullies he respected courage. Besides, he was an unusually perceptive critic and possessed two sorts of knowledge that formed a remarkable blend of the instinctive and the intellectual. There was the knowledge that he derived from a lifetime's reading: there was also the intuitive, untaught knowledge that, although it may be confirmed by the study of books and sharpened by observation, is in the last resort a natural gift, an attribute with which some men are born and in which others until the day of their death remain totally deficient. He had the knack of appraising almost at a glance the mechanism on which his fellow human beings were constructed. Thus he saw (we may imagine), and he did not dislike, the strange mixture of the bold and the timid, the cautiously reflective and the foolishly excitable, that constituted the basis of Boswell's character. He liked the patience and the good humour with which his talkative Scottish acquaintance opposed rebuffs. He appreciated the zest, the relish of experience for experience' sake, with which he himself, in spite of his constitutional melancholy, was so singularly endowed. And when Boswell presumed to call on him at his chambers at One Inner-Temple-Lane and opened big eyes at the uncouth apparition of the slovenly philosopher in his 'little old shrivelled unpowdered wig', rusty brown suit and 'black worsted stockings ill drawn up', Johnson's heart was touched and his sympathies were set in motion. Once his heart

was touched, he felt a debt of moral gratitude that all the treasures of his intelligence, all the resources of his understanding, were needed to repay.

At their first parting, on June 13th, Johnson observed: 'Come to me as often as you can', and, on June 25th, after Boswell in his usual effusive manner had produced a brief sketch of his life: 'Give me your hand; I have taken a liking to you.' The first period of their friendship, however, was comparatively brief. Early in August Boswell, commanded by his father to study law at Utrecht, left London bound for the Low Countries, Johnson accompanying him on the stage-coach as far as Harwich. They dined, prayed together in the parish church, then walked down to the place of embarkation. As the land receded, Boswell continued to gaze at Johnson. ' . . . I kept my eyes upon him for a considerable time, while he remained rolling his majestic frame in his usual manner; and at last I perceived him walk back into the town, and he disappeared.'

The years of travel that followed—from August 1763 to February 1766—might be described as the formative period of Boswell's development, could that fluid character at any time be looked on as fully formed. They were at least immensely instructive and highly interesting: for after a spell of intense spiritual depression in the Low Countries, which Boswell (who had already remarked of himself that he possessed 'the most veering amorous affections that I ever knew anybody have') enlivened by paying a rather tentative suit to the fascinating Zélide, otherwise Belle de Zuylen, the future Madame de Charrière, mistress of Benjamin Constant, he embarked on a protracted tour which included Switzerland, Italy and the numerous German courts. There is something extremely pleasant in the contemplation through his own eyes of the young Scotsman posting about Europe, thrusting his merits on the attention of the great and famous—whom, after the initial shock had subsided, he usually pleased and amused—and laying simultaneous unsuccessful siege to a variety of bewildered foreign noblewomen. Each country seemed to demand of him a separate personal rôle. By turns he was philosophic, courtly, amorous and devout; and in the preparation of the parts he felt he was required to play he was continually selecting some new human model whom he strove to resemble or sought to outdo. In his journal he made notes of

his successive infatuations. ‘Be Erskine’ (he scribbled), ‘Be Sir D. Dalrymple’, ‘Be Father’, ‘Be Johnson (You resemble him)’, ‘Be Rock of Gibraltar’ even! until, suddenly revolting against these extremities of self-imposed servitude, ‘I must be Mr Boswell of Auchinleck and no other’ (he wrote firmly and defiantly). ‘Let me make him as perfect as possible.’

That last resolution is as characteristic of Boswell’s nature as the mood of extravagant humility by which it had been preceded. In his relationship with men older and more celebrated than himself there was always this strange mingling of impudence and self-abasement; and when, dressed in sea-green and silver or in flowered velvet, he had at last wheedled his way into Voltaire’s household, he records complacently that he, an unknown Scotsman of twenty-four, and the most famous and the most feared of European writers had met, talked and argued on perfectly equal terms. Reverential he may have been, but he was not abashed:

‘For a certain portion of time (he wrote to his old friend Temple, in a rapturous letter composed at Ferney itself) there was a fair opposition between Voltaire and Boswell. The daring bursts of his Ridicule confounded my understanding. . . .’

But Boswell’s volubility—they were discussing the immortality of the soul and other religious subjects—eventually made its mark:

‘He went too far. His aged frame trembled beneath him. He cried, “O I am very sick. My head turns round”, and he let himself gently fall upon an easy chair. He recovered. I resumed our Conversation, but changed the tone.’

Voltaire, however, liked him well enough to gratify him before he left the neighbourhood with a letter in English, written in his own small, beautifully rounded hand, rallying the young man on his solemn, self-important concern with ‘that pretty thing call’d Soul. I do protest you I know nothing of it. Nor wether it is, nor what it is, nor what it shall be. Young scolars, and priests know all that perfectly. For my part I am but a very ignorant fellow.’

Rousseau, a far shyer quarry, was also run to earth. He too found Boswell’s company somewhat overwhelming and frequently begged that his admirer’s visits should not be unduly long; but, like Voltaire, he consented to talk and listen, and was made the recipient of the traveller’s hopes and projects and of the

hundred-and-one phantasmagoric notions that went whirling through his head. Boswell's originality seems to have struck a responsive chord; for, disdaining to present the letter of introduction with which he had come equipped, he demanded admission to Rousseau's society as an honour he deserved. Having gained his point, he appeared on Rousseau's doorstep arrayed in almost martial splendour; and the Solitary, 'a genteel, black man in the dress of an Armenian', was confronted by Boswell habited in scarlet and gold-laced coat and waistcoat, boots and buckskin breeches. 'Above all I wore a great coat of Green Camlet lined with Foxskin fur, with collar and cuffs of the same fur. I held under my arm a hat with solid gold lace, at least with the air of being solid.' The kind of discussion Boswell loved was soon initiated. Was Rousseau a Christian? he demanded promptly, and fixed the suspected infidel 'with a searching eye'. Rousseau's countenance was 'no less animated. Each stood steady and watched the other's looks. He struck his breast, and replied "*Oui —je me pique de l'être.*"' Did he approve of polygamy? Boswell himself had much to say in its favour; but Rousseau demurred at the heterodox suggestion that Boswell might reasonably be permitted to enjoy a plurality of virgins—thirty was the number he had had first in mind—get them with child as he liked and afterwards marry them off to respectable peasant husbands. For Boswell, at all events, these were prodigiously exciting hours; nor, in his impulsive manner, did he stand on ceremony; and 'when M. Rousseau said what touched me more than ordinary, I seized his hand, I thumped him on the shoulder. I was without restraint'. Finally, on 15th December, after a succession of such meetings, the moment came for Boswell to say goodbye; and Rousseau saw him depart, perhaps with relief but also (it would appear) with something like regret. There were embraces and, on Boswell's side, there was a sprinkling of tears. 'He kist me several times and held me in his arms with elegant cordiality. . . .' 'Adieu', exclaimed Rousseau, '*vous êtes un galant homme!*' '*Vous avez eu beaucoup de bonté pour moi*', Boswell replied with fervent gratitude, adding characteristically: '*Je le mérite.*'

When he paid his respects to Rousseau and Voltaire, Boswell was, of course, following in the footsteps of many previous travellers. His reception had been flattering; but these encounters had not quite the flavour of singularity that his self-esteem demanded.

Italy proved delightful, but deficient in great men, and Italian women, though highly seductive, were rather less accommodating than he had at first expected. Why not Corsica then? He had long been anxious to visit the island kingdom; and on 28th September 1765, leaving behind him 'sweet Siena' and an Italian woman of quality with whom he was carrying on a passionate, entertaining but, from the practical point of view, somewhat disappointing and inconclusive correspondance, he reached Leghorn, whence he set sail on 11th October. At this stage the traveller's private papers add very little to the narrative of the published *Tour*. During the voyage he 'threw up', amused himself with his flute and was tormented by 'muschettoes and other vermin'. But the journal stops short when he lands in Corsica and begins again, when having traversed the island and spent a few days in the company of General Paoli, leader of the Corsican insurgents against the French and Genoese—a man after Boswell's own heart, that is to say, such a man as he could never hope to be, resolute, manly, uncomplicated, independent—he left on 20th November and was driven by foul weather to take refuge on the rocky island of Capraja. There he remained for more than a week, a prey to all the vicissitudes of his capricious humour, now peevish, now downcast, now—as the result of a 'too hearty dinner'—strolling about 'full of wild and curious' fancies. The end of the month found him at Genoa; and from Genoa he at last turned his face in the direction of Great Britain.

His account of his journey home provides several instructive episodes. At his heels he dragged the undisciplined and ill-conditioned watch-dog with which Paoli had presented him. A Swiss servant—hardly less troublesome—was his only other companion; and with this servant, named Jacob, he was perpetually disputing. Boswell's treatment of Jacob was extremely characteristic. Though he prided himself on being a man of birth and fashion, he could not refrain—such was his native curiosity—from conduct that towards a servant he felt to be improper. Why was his valet so insubordinate? The course that he adopted was to ask the valet himself. And Jacob, when pressed, returned a candid answer. He could see at once, he replied, that Monsieur had not received a proper education. '*Il n'a pas les manières d'un Seigneur. Il a le cœur trop ouvert.*' So struck was Boswell by the justice of this statement that he forgot to be annoyed. Of course,

he replied, it was quite true that he had been two-and-twenty before he had had his own servant: to which Jacob responded that in his opinion the son of a gentleman should learn the art of managing a servant while he was still young. '*Monsieur force un Domestique de parler d'une manière qu'il ne doit pas, parceque Monsieur le tourmente en le questionnant. Il voudroit savoir tout au fond.* . . .' 'The fellow (Boswell concludes) talked with so much good sense, so much truth . . . that upon my word I admired him; I, however, hoped that a few years more would temper all that impetuosity and remove all that weakness which now render me inconstant and capricious.'

Arrived in Paris—after conversations with the galley-slaves of Marseilles and, at Avignon, with the exiled Jacobite gentry—Boswell made haste to leave cards on Horace Walpole, who received him in a polite but distant fashion, and visited Wilkes, whose hospitality was far less guarded. Then, as he sat one day in Wilkes's apartment looking through the newspapers, he read in the *St. James's Chronicle* of his mother's death. At first he was completely stunned. He respected and feared Lord Auchinleck, but had loved his mother; and a wave of regret and sorrow promptly overwhelmed him. For a time he rallied and hurried off to the Dutch Ambassador's. But, no sooner was dinner done, than the poignancy of his grief once again grew insupportable and 'as in a fever' he rushed to a brothel he had already visited. Next day his mood was calm and sentimental. He prayed to his mother's spirit, like a Catholic to his saint, and soothed his melancholy by singing Italian airs. . . . All this is noted in his Journal without a shadow of self-consciousness; for, though he was delighted to exhibit his strong and fluent emotions, Boswell had little of the affectation of the contemporary Man of Feeling, and was too honest a self-observer to attempt to magnify their spell. That filial sorrow should drive him headlong into sensual dissipation was a fact that he observed with interest and with some surprise. His thirst for information—that passion *savoir tout au fond* which Jacob had observed—made him the candid recorder of happenings he did not attempt to justify.

RUTHVEN TODD

# THE REPUTATION OF HENRY FUSELI

Deserve, but expect not, to be praised by your contemporaries, for any excellence which they may be jealous of being allowed to possess themselves; leave the dispensation of justice to posterity.<sup>1</sup>

'I THOUGHT that one could do good painting without attracting attention to one's private life. An artist, to be sure, wishes to raise his standard intellectually as much as possible, but the man himself must remain in obscurity.'<sup>2</sup> So Cézanne, unaware of the various forces which conflict to make an artist out of a man facing a stretched canvas with a loaded brush in his hand, wrote to Joachim Gasquet.

What a man *does* and *how* he does it, depends upon what that man *is* and *how* he lives; if he has enough money to buy himself a meal when hungry and to get drunk when depressed, if he quarrels with his wife or mistress; if he fights against the *Zeitgeist* (either as a progressive or as a reactionary—it does not seem to matter), or is content to let it envelop him and bear him easily along with it, the captive of a runaway barrage-balloon: a man's work depends on so many things that it is difficult to think of something in his life which does *not* concern it.

This is, or should be, the excuse of the art-historian; picking up a fragment of gossip here and a fact or a date there, a statement on one subject and the suggestion of an attitude towards another, an opinion from this man and the reason of the enmity of that; reading old books of memoirs, newspaper-files and bundles of letters; trying to correct the bias towards respectability of an 'official biographer', and to fill in the encyclopædia or dictionary outline; to present a picture of the man and consequently of his works, both in relation to the artist's times, *and* (it is here so many of our historians fail) in relation to the time of writing. Too often today the judgment of, say, Sir Walter Armstrong or Algernon Graves is served up with a complete disregard for the fact that maggots will eat even the best joint if kept too long. The

study of the growth and decline of a man's reputation is often instructive.

The time of Henry Fuseli was the time of William Blake with Jerusalem pillared on Primrose Hill, of the Gothic novel and Strawberry Hill ('We are more impressed by Gothic than by Greek mythology, because the bands are not yet rent which tie us to its magic'<sup>3</sup>), of Monk Lewis flavouring terror with indecency as Sade used horror as a wrapper for obscenity, of Joanna Southcott and of the 'nephew of the Almighty', Richard Brothers, who met the devil clad in a scarlet cloak, strolling down the Tottenham Court Road.

During this period the fabulously wealthy Beckford, to spite a world which had ostracized him for a rumour of homosexuality, erected the fantastic fabric of Fonthill Abbey to enjoy a world of his own creation; from the lofty tower to the twelve foot wall around his domain he was, in truth, God, throwing open a vista here or placing a fully-grown grove there, as the whim took him. It was the period during which the belated and uneasy classicism of Gray and Sir Robert Chambers was to give way before the romanticism of Byron and of Pugin.

For a long time before the Bastille fell, the air had been heavy and taut—a September day waiting for the thunder—and, after, the ripples of revolution continued to break gently on the shores of England, so that even the Royal Academy did not feel quite secure, but had its members smelling out democrats as assiduously as a Labour Cabinet Minister today smells out Communists, e.g. Flaxman, who, on March 2, 1807, told Joseph Farington that 'He regretted that Fuseli was not continued Professor of Painting & the more so from having heard Opie's 2nd Lecture on Monday last, which He sd. had a Democratic spirit in it, & was charged with complaint of want of patronage, instancing Hogarth & Barry as great geniuses neglected.'<sup>4</sup>

This was also the period of the early steam engines and of scientific inquiry, of the Nasmyths dividing their time between the palette and the steam-hammer, of the Mechanics' Institutes and the penny number, under the sway of Joseph Lackington and about to become the domain of Charles Knight, ready to exchange *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *Melmoth the Wanderer* for the novels of Jules Verne and the forerunners of the detective story—the Newgate novels of the 1830's and Harrison Ainsworth's *Rookwood* (1834).

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley could no longer drag her monster screaming from a blood-fed mandrake at the foot of a gallows. It was no longer possible to create trolls by magic (behind the waterfall was the geologist Dean Buckland with his hammer, and in front were William Gilpin and Sir Uvedale Price, noting their sensations). So, Frankenstein was presented, not as an alchemist, a Doctor Faustus bartering with the devil, but as a scientist; and nineteen qualified doctors guaranteed the genuineness of Joanna Southcott's pregnancy, while William Sharp, the eminent engraver, and William Owen Pugh, the first maker of a Welsh dictionary and translator of Milton into that language, prepared the layette for the coming of the Shiloh.

It was an age of explanation and justification (Progress had not yet become the abstract ideal that was to organize the Great Exhibition and erect the Crystal Palace as its own memorial), and even the arts received their share of analysis. Hogarth's theory of beauty as the direct consequence of a curved line was supplanted by Burke's decision that the beautiful was that which produced a peculiar relaxation and languor in the spectator; in its turn replaced by the theory of association, expounded and expanded by Alison and Payne Knight.

Once any emotion had been admitted as valid in an understanding of the arts, it had to be dissected and excused. Impressed by this necessity, Sir Uvedale Price, a follower of Burke, wrote:

I am persuaded that it would be difficult to conceive any set of objects, to which, however grand in themselves, an addition of terror would not give a higher degree of sublimity; and surely that must be a cause, and a principal cause, the increase of which increases the effect—the absence of which weakens or destroys it. The sea is at all times a grand object; need I say how much that grandeur is increased by the violence of another element, and again, by thunder and lightning? Why are rocks and precipices more sublime, when the tide dashes at the foot of them, forbidding all access, or cutting off all retreat, than when we can with ease approach, or retire from them? . . . The nearer any grand or terrible objects in nature press upon the mind (providing that mind is able to contemplate them with awe, but without abject fear) the more sublime will be their effects. The most savage rocks, precipices, and cataracts, as they keep their stations, are only awful; but should an earthquake shake their foundations, and open a new gulf beneath the cataract—he, who removed from immediate danger, could dare at such a moment to gaze on such a spectacle, would surely have sensations of a much higher kind, than those which were impressed upon him when all was still and unmoved.<sup>5</sup>

(This seems to conjure up and approve the paintings of John

Martin, where vast temples topple and slide through wide cracks in the surface of the earth, and the sky is split open with the promise of a new Revelation, draining blood from the great wound of heaven into the dwarfed landscape beneath; Martin, it should be noted, dealt with a universe explicable in Biblical and miraculous terms, a universe acceptable where a mythological and magical one was not.)

Fuseli on the subject of terror is much more concise ('Lawrence remarked that Fuseli's letters were written in an *Epigrammatic style*, in which much sense and knowledge was condensed in a small compass, That His manner of writing was not agreeable to those authors & readers of the present day, who are captivated by a stile woven out & very different from his. Were *His matter* expressed in the manner which suits their taste, they would be enchanted by it.'<sup>6</sup>) In his *Aphorisms on Art*, designed as a companion to the *Aphorisms on Man* of his friend, John Caspar Lavater, which he translated in 1788, we find:

The loathsome is abominable, and no engine of expression.

Sympathy and disgust are the lines that separate terror from horror; though we shudder at, we scarcely pity what we abominate.

The axe, the wheel, sawdust, and the blood-strained sheet are not legitimate substitutes of terror.<sup>7</sup>

Both writers have the same object—the explanation of the attraction of the terrible and the justification of that attraction. Both seek to define the terrible, but, while Sir Uvedale Price would have refused to admit the magical as a cause of terror in his mind (he was of the family of Blake's Urizen, a product of the age of reason), Fuseli drew from the imagination which knows no boundary of logic, and could have echoed Blake's declaration: 'I question not my Corporeal or Vegetative Eye any more than I would Question a Window concerning a Sight. I look thro' it & not with it.'<sup>8</sup>

A legend grew around the figure of Fuseli, helped, no doubt, by his personality, which prompted Northcote to describe him as 'a butterfly—ingenious and fanciful and amusing—but has no strength of mind,—timid,—capricious,—vain and affected.'<sup>9</sup> There is no reason for doubting that Fuseli was all these things, but, in spite of his timidity, he remained one of the few Royal Academicians who was bold enough to support his private opinions with his public acts and statements: at the annual election

of the President of the Royal Academy in 1794 one vote was recorded for Mrs. Lloyd (*née* Mary Moser), the flower painter, while most of the others were given to West; taxed with casting this vote, Fuseli justified it with the remark that one old woman was as good as another. The shocked Farington relates, also, that Fuseli, a renegade priest, 'was not an advocate for public or perhaps for any worship, saying *everything had been given to us & we had nothing to ask for*.—Such were the light & inconsiderate sentiments which He uttered.'<sup>10</sup>

The extent to which the legend of him as monster had grown by 1805 is shown in B. R. Haydon's account of his first meeting with Fuseli:

Galvanized devils—malicious witches brewing their incantations—Satan bridging Chaos, and springing upwards like a pyramid of fire—Lady Macbeth—Paolo and Francesca—Falstaff and Mrs. Quickly—humour, pathos, terror, blood, and murder, met one at every look! I expected the floor to give way—I fancied Fuseli himself to be a giant. I heard his footsteps and saw a little bony hand slide round the edge of the door, followed by a little white-headed lion-faced man in an old flannel dressing-gown tied round his waist with a piece of rope and upon his head the bottom of Mrs. Fuseli's work-basket.<sup>11</sup>

The tale of the relationship between Haydon and Fuseli, related in the former's autobiography, is a comedy of real and imagined slights and insults, e.g. Fuseli credited Haydon with the authorship of the violent attacks on him written by Robert Hunt for the *Examiner*, attacks of the kind which impelled Blake to write, 'Such an artist as Fuseli is invulnerable, he needs not my defence; but I should be ashamed not to set my hand and shoulder, and whole strength, against those wretches who, under the pretence of criticism, use the dagger and the poison.'<sup>12</sup>

Most of the contemporary onslaughts against Fuseli accuse him of distorting the human body into impossible attitudes, but this line of attack seems to have been founded on ignorance, as, in 1824, John Henry Lavater, in the dedication of his *Introduction to the Study of the Anatomy of the Human Body*, refers to 'the energetic figures and the ingenious combinations which I beheld your creative hand draw forth frequently from the delusive obscurity of Nature, the real forms of which the eye of genius alone is capable of discerning . . . you, who are so profoundly conversant in anatomy.' Perhaps part of this eulogy can be discounted on the grounds of family friendship, but Charles Bell, the surgeon, had no sentimental reasons for being gentle with

Fuseli's reputation and would have been certain to pounce on gross anatomical inaccuracy if it had existed. In a rather petulant letter to his brother, dated July 26, 1808, in which he dismisses Flaxman as 'a kind of lapidary', he writes that Fuseli is 'unquestionably a man of genius; his sketches are remarkably fine, but often he paints a log for a man; is rarely simple, which is an ingredient in the truly sublime or grand. In his painting he is extravagant; in his writing turgid and inflated, labouring and big with something he cannot express, and in his criticism more extravagant still.'<sup>13</sup> (It is worth remembering that both Blake and Samuel Palmer stressed the value of 'excess', and that both were ardent admirers of Fuseli.)

Directly opposed is the opinion of Sir Thomas Lawrence, certainly a greater connoisseur than artist, who showed his appreciation of Fuseli by owning twenty-one paintings by him. Writing to Thomas Uwins in 1825, just after Fuseli's death, he makes some remarks on Michelangelo and goes on, 'We have just sustained the loss of kindred genius, if not greater, in the original and lofty conceptions of Mr. Fuseli. In poetic invention it is not too much to say he has had no equal since the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, and if his drawings and proportions were mannered and sometimes carried to excess, still it was exaggeration of the grandeur of antique form, and not—as in many—enlargement of the mean and ordinary in nature.'<sup>14</sup>

Five years after the death of Fuseli, Haydon, seeing in the theatrical extravagance of his former master his mental portrait of himself down the wrong end of a telescope, attempted to sum up his achievement in the following account, which, although flavoured by his own ambitions, is obviously honest and, within the limits of his time, just:

Fuzeli was undoubtedly the greatest genius of that day. His Milton gallery shewed a range of imagination equal to the poet's; his Satan bridging Chaos, his Uriel watching Satan, his Shepherd's Dream, his Fairies from Shakespeare, and his Ghost in Hamlet, announce him as . . . being the greatest inventor in art since Julio Romano. But in the modes of conveying his thoughts by form, colour, light, and shadow, and above all, nature, he was a monster in design; his women are all strumpets, and his men all banditti, with the action of galvanized frogs, the dress of montebanks, and the hue of pestilential putridity. No man had the power like Fuzeli of rousing the dormant spirit of youth; and there issued from his inspirations a nucleus of painters, who have been the firmest supporters of the British school.

But Fuseli, as a painter, must be a warning to all. Had he taken the trouble to convey his thoughts like the great masters, his pictures would have risen as time advanced; yet as time advances, his pictures, from having no hold on our feelings like the simplicity of nature, must sink. His conceptions, however poetical, are not enough to satisfy the mind in an art, the elements of which are laid in lovely nature; and great as his genius was in fancy and conception, inventor as he was in art of fairies and ghosts, he will never be an object to imitate, but always to avoid by young men, who are more likely to lay hold of his defects than his beauties. The finest conception of a ghost that ever was painted, was the Ghost in Hamlet on the battlements. There it quivered with martial stride, pointing to a place of meeting with Hamlet; and round its vizored head was a halo of light that looked sulphureous, and made one feel as if one actually smelt hell, burning, cindery, and suffocating. The dim moon glittered behind; the sea roared in the distance, as if agitated by the presence of a supernatural spirit; and the ghost looked at Hamlet, with eyes that glared like the light in the eyes of a lion, which is savagely growling over his bloody food. But still it was a German ghost, and not the ghost of Shakespeare. There was nothing in it to touch human sympathies combined with the infernal; there was nothing at all of 'his sable, silvered beard', or his countenance more 'in sorrow than in anger'; it was a fierce, demoniacal, armed fiend reeking from hell, who had not yet expiated 'the crimes done in his days of nature', to qualify him for heaven. His next finest works were the two fairy pictures in the Shakespeare gallery, some diving into harebells, some sailing in Bottom's shoe; but beautiful as they were, indeed the only fairies ever painted, still your heart longed for nature in colour, form, action, and expression. Such an union had the Greeks, and no art in the world will be perfect until it appears again. These pictures are evidences of the highest conception of the fanciful and supernatural. His Lazar House is an evidence of his power of pathos; his Uriel and Satan of the poetical; his Puck putting on a girdle, of the humorous and mischievous. But when Fuseli attempted the domestic, as in the illustrations of Cowper, his total want of nature stares one in the face, like the eyes of his own ghosts.<sup>16</sup>

Against the estimate of the half-blind Haydon, laboriously copying the sinews of a foot from the Elgin marbles in a dark shed and dreaming of a 'History picture' as large as the wall of a house, we can set that of the neat Charles Robert Leslie, R.A., another pupil, the manufacturer of genteel illustrations of the classics (Stothard with the guts removed), who was, yet, an honest and seldom wrong-headed critic (he admired the early Pre-Raphaelite paintings and told the painters of his admiration). Writing twenty-five years later than Haydon, he says:

With no artist of powers as great as those of Fuseli were those powers confined within so narrow a circle; but within that circle he has expressed the terror and the evanescence of the world of phantoms, with a power unequalled by any painter that ever lived. Perhaps the finest of all his works is the 'Sin-

and Death'; and in this he has done that which, had he not done it, we might have thought impossible—he has embodied Milton's words: 'What seemed his head the likeness of a kingly crown had on'.

In the 'Satan' of Sir Thomas Lawrence (the worst portrait he ever painted), all is so material as to be wholly unnatural with reference to the subject. The body and limbs of the fiend are as solid as the shaft of the spear he holds; and the helmet, sword and shield seem borrowed from the property-room of a theatre. In the 'Sin and Death' of Fuseli there are a ponderous key (the key of the gates of Hell) and a chain. But they are forged by no earthly smith, and are not otherwise thought of the spectator than as parts of a terrible vision.

If what I have said of his Art may be thought to contradict my urging the necessity of the study of nature to the imaginative painter, I would remark that he was profoundly acquainted with all in Nature that could help his conceptions of the visionary. He was a perfect master of chiaroscuro and of the evanescence of colour, and he possessed such a competent knowledge of the anatomical structure of the human figure as to be able to give ideal probability to attitudes in which it was impossible that he could be helped by living models. Hence, he could also give to his ghosts that general and uncertain look that belongs to shadowy beings, without the omission of the leading characteristics of form; and his breadth, to borrow an expression of his own, is never 'emptiness' . . . Everybody can laugh at the extravagances that so often disfigure the works of Fuseli. But it would require eloquence equal to his own to do justice to his finest things, and in spite of his great faults, I cannot but look on him as a great genius, a genius for whom the age in which he lived was unworthy.<sup>16</sup>

Reading these estimates of his stature, making allowance for the bias of contemporaries and pupils (it is noteworthy that none of his pupils ever turned completely against him), it would be reasonable to expect that Fuseli's reputation would have retained something of its high level throughout the nineteenth century, for it should be remembered that his work was admired by *painters*—painters who could see the emptiness of so much of West's work and who did not contribute to inflate that reputation.

However, Fuseli himself was not sanguine, having 'little hope of *Poetical* painting finding encouragement in England. The People are not prepared for it. Portrait with them is everything.—Their taste & feelings all go to realities.—The ideal does not operate on their minds.—*Historical* painting, viz: Matter of fact they may encourage.'<sup>17</sup> Replacing the word 'historical' with 'anecdotal', this gives a pretty fair forecast of the course of patronage from say, 1860, and is one of the reasons for his own reputation's gannet-like plunge. By 1868, at the B. W. Windus sale, his *Lycidas* (presumably the painting now in a private collection at Basle, measuring 102 by 95 cm.), fetched sixteen guineas, and his

most famous painting, *The Nightmare* (now in the possession of Professor Ganz, Basle, 63 by 76 cm.), only brought about a pound.

Part of the trouble was that Fuseli did not make a good bedmate for one of the 'creations' (I use the word in its millinery sense) of a Francis Grant, a W. B. Richmond or an Alma-Tadema. Then, the size and unavailability of most of his pictures helped the compilers of histories of English painting, who have not bothered to seek them out, or even to look carefully at the collection of his drawings in the British Museum Print Room; the word 'extravagant' has been handed down among them as an heirloom. Too many people have been interested in Blake, as a poet and as a painter, for a writer to dare to omit him (though, as a 'misfit', he nearly always gets a chapter to himself—the chapter where Fuseli, Palmer, Calvert and Linnell are pigeonholed in a line or two). There was no money invested in Fuseli's pictures, so the uncomfortable creature was banished to the attic, from which he occasionally let fall a drawing which could not be dismissed as negligible or as 'Blakean', or one of his extraordinarily neatly coiffured obscenities to horrify eyes attuned to the 'nice' drawing-room pornography of the Rev. Matthew William Peters, R.A.

In spite of this slurring over of his name, however, the stream of appreciation continued as a trickle underground; he is highly praised by Alexander Gilchrist in his *Life of Blake* (1863) and a short and appreciative account of him was given in the Redgraves's *A Century of Painters of the English School* (1866). As might have been expected, the Rossetti brothers had a high opinion of his abilities (their artistic interests are a subject that would repay investigation—D. G. bought the Blake Notebook from Samuel Palmer's hangdog brother William, one of the two pictures on his walls in 1848 was 'an engraving after that great painter Von Holst', and he admired and assisted James Smetham, while W. M., whose art criticism is not contemptible, paid the only recorded visit to Richard Dadd in Bedlam and saw him working on a drawing).

In the years following 1900, the reaction against the anecdotal became so pronounced that few of those who were interested in contemporary painting cared to see anything in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in England beyond landscape. About 1920, however, excited by the disappearance of Fuseli's drawings and paintings to Switzerland, where Professor Paul Ganz had

been working on an authoritative book, people in this country again began to take an interest in the oddest man and most original artist (excluding Turner, who was odd and original in another way) ever to become a member of that genteel club of certified gentlemen—the Royal Academy.

Today, when we are stumbling towards an understanding of our dreams, we have found in the word ‘subconscious’ an admirable excuse for a liking for, say, the desolate arcades and squares of Chirico, the plasmic dancing amoeba of Miro and the flexible watches and crutch-supported buttocks of Salvador Dali.

Like Fuseli, we have a passion for the inexplicable, witness the attraction of the terrible novels and stories of Franz Kafka. Too much of the world has been tied up in neat parcels and deposited in the left-luggage office at Piccadilly Circus tube station. We can, for instance, appreciate the illogical and weird element in the story which Fuseli related to the Locks of Norbury:

The morning of a fox hunt a large party of gentlemen met, and as they proceeded to the chase were joined by others. One among the rest was particularly distinguished by the elegance of his figure, and the activity and grace with which he rode. Lord Lyttelton, when the chase was over, invited him to return home to dinner, and there he was the most entertaining companion they had ever met. The party continued drinking late and he sat with them and endeavoured to prolong the evening, but they dropped off one by one, some under the table, others fast asleep in their seats. At length, very unwillingly, the stranger desired to be shown his chamber. Before long the most dreadful yells were heard and traced to the stranger's room; they knocked at the door and begged to know if he were ill. An angry ‘No!’ was all they could obtain, and upon the question being repeated he desired they would return to bed. But the yells continued with such violence that they could bear it no longer and broke open the door, when to their horror the stranger appeared streaming with blood, and they saw that the floor and the bed were also covered with blood. He held a whip in his hand with which he seemed to have been inflicting a horrible scourging. He said he was very sorry the house had been disturbed but assured them that it was now over and they might go to sleep again, and that the next day at breakfast he would explain what appeared so extraordinary to them. Next morning they waited impatiently for the promised communication, but lo! the stranger was gone. They inquired of the grooms, who related that at break of day he came down, took his horse out of the stable and disappeared.<sup>18</sup>

As I have said, Fuseli's paintings are not readily accessible (there was a new one in the Tate Wartime Accessions exhibition in May 1942), but his drawings do not suffer much in reproduction, and it is in them that we will probably find his most

characteristic work, for there is undoubted truth in Farington's statement that 'The observations which Fuseli made of the disadvantage .He has suffered from not having had proper *early* education in the art are certainly shewn in his works to be just. His powers of execution cannot keep pace with his conceptions, which are generally, if not always, of a nature that particularly require vigorous practice to express them properly.'<sup>19</sup>

There must be literally thousands of his drawings scattered around this country and in Switzerland, many of them masquerading as the works of other artists. He could, and did, employ a multitude of styles, so that we can encounter drawings that might be Italian of the sixteenth century or, on the other hand, that might be Flaxman—not very good Flaxman, lacking his Puritanism and his correctness of line, and there are drawings which show the influence of Blake, just as there are Blakes showing the influence of Fuseli—in neither case are they the best works of the artists.

The one influence on Fuseli which seems to have been beneficial is that of an almost unknown Edinburgh painter, John Brown, whom he met at Rome in the 1760's. Brown, who died of consumption at the age of thirty-five, was closely connected with another neglected painter, Alexander Runciman, who, it is probable, also had some influence on Fuseli. The chief work of the latter was a series of frescoes from Ossian, at Penicuik, near Edinburgh, which was destroyed by fire in 1899; his brother John, who was twenty-four when he died, is another very interesting painter who either was influenced by, or had influence on Fuseli. Very little is so far known about any of them, but the few drawings by Brown which I have managed to see show the vivid unearthly reality of a rather better Beardsley and would certainly pass as very good Fuseli. That Fuseli himself was touchy on the subject of this influence is shown by his one recorded mention of Brown, breaking peevishly across a conversation, "Well, Brown, Brown, we have had enough of Brown; let us now talk of Cipriani, who is in hell."<sup>20</sup>

Fuseli was obsessed by the terrible and the colossal—"Common-place figures are as inadmissible in the grand style of painting as common-place characters or sentiments in poetry"<sup>21</sup>—but he frequently failed to notice in his own work the danger he himself had pointed out, that 'Tameness lies on this side of expression,

grimace overleaps it',<sup>22</sup> with a result that many of his ghosts in skin-tight armour and bristle-chinned witches do show a tendency to grimace.

A hundred and thirty years before the advent of the surrealists, presumably thinking of his own painting of *The Nightmare*, he remarked that 'One of the most unexplored regions of art are dreams.'<sup>23</sup> However, it is not in his grand or terrible pictures that we will find what is perhaps his finest, and certainly his most completely original work. This will be found in these 'domestic' drawings which Haydon failed to appreciate; drawings in which there is nothing of the domesticity envisaged by an Augustus Egg. They show women engaged in ordinary tasks, dressing for a ball or embroidering a scarf; yet, into these commonplace scenes, Fuseli has managed to infuse the pure clarity of a dream. There is intense concentration on unimportant detail, so that all the women have immense or elaborate coiffures (he was apparently obsessed by the mechanics of hair-dressing), and even the placing of a cup upon a table seems to have some terrible significance. His tall fantastic women in the long clinging dresses of the period are, as Haydon suggests, procuresses and whores rather than figures from Cowper's poems, and all their everyday actions have become magical rites; the terrible pales into ordinariness beside these drawings where the domestic scene enters the realm of the dream.

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The two principal sources of information about Fuseli are the 'official biography', *The Life and Writings of Henry Fuseli*, John Knowles, London, 1831, and *Johann Heinrich Füssli, Dichter und Maler*, Arnold Federmann, Zurich and Leipzig, 1927, which is very well illustrated. A good summary of the facts about Fuseli's life is given by John Piper in his article in *Signature*, 10, 1938; I have, so far as possible, not duplicated his information.

<sup>1</sup> Knowles, iii, 70; Aphorism 25.

<sup>2</sup> *Paul Cézanne Letters*, edited by John Rewald, 1941, p. 198.

<sup>3</sup> Knowles, iii, 120; Aphorism 105.

<sup>4</sup> *The Farington Diary*, edited by James Grieg, 1922 etc., iv, 91.

<sup>5</sup> *Sir Uvedale Price on the Picturesque [1801]*, edited by Sir Thomas Dick Lauder, 1842, pp. 102-3.

<sup>6</sup> *Farington Diary*, iv, 60.

<sup>7</sup> Knowles, iii, 89, 91; Aphorisms 86, 87, 91.

<sup>8</sup> *Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, edited by Geoffrey Keynes, 1939 edition, p. 652.

- <sup>9</sup> *Farington Diary*, i, 225.
- <sup>10</sup> *Farington Diary*, v, 4.
- <sup>11</sup> *The Autobiography and Memoirs of Benjamin Robert Haydon*, edited by Tom Taylor (1853), 1926 edition, i, 22.
- <sup>12</sup> *Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, p. 911.
- <sup>13</sup> *Art in England 1800-1820*, William T. Whitley, 1928, p. 137.
- <sup>14</sup> *Art in England 1821-1837*, William T. Whitley, 1930, p. 83.
- <sup>15</sup> *Painting and The Fine Arts: being the Articles under those Heads contributed to the Seventh Edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica [1830]*, B. R. Haydon and William Hazlitt, 1838, pp. 213-4.
- <sup>16</sup> *A Hand-Book for Young Painters*, C. R. Leslie, R.A., 1855, pp. 137-8.
- <sup>17</sup> *Farington Diary*, iii, 91.
- <sup>18</sup> *The Locks of Norbury*, The Duchess of Sermoneta, 1940, pp. 46-7.
- <sup>19</sup> *Farington Diary*, ii, 45.
- <sup>20</sup> *Nollekens and his Times*, J. T. Smith, 1828, ii, 418.
- <sup>21</sup> Knowles, iii, 80; Aphorism 55.
- <sup>22</sup> Knowles, iii, 87; Aphorism 78.
- <sup>23</sup> Knowles, iii, 145; Aphorism 231.

J. MACLAREN-ROSS

## THIS MORTAL COIL

I WAS on picquet that night, I'd just come off the door. It was about ten o'clock and when I came in the guard-room I expected to find them all dossed down for the night. But instead they were up, firewatchers and all, some standing about, some sitting on benches by the table, and Corporal Weemes, the Picquet Commander, sat on the table itself. All looked so expectant that I said: 'What's up? Scheme on or something?'

'No, no,' they said. 'It's Kelly.'

'Kelly?'

They pointed to a corner of the room, by the telephone table. What I had taken for a heap of blankets lay there. But these evidently concealed a man of some sort, because as I looked at them they began to heave and writhe about: at the same time a series of grunts came from underneath them. The fellows bounced up and down on the bench, some clapped their hands in glee.

'He's starting,' they said. 'He's got started.'

Corporal Weemes looked at his watch. 'Ten o'clock,' he said. 'On the dot. He always starts off at ten.'

The grunts were succeeded by an awful, unearthly sound, like a wolf howling. At first it was muffled by the blankets, but as these fell off and a head emerged, it positively filled the room with its volume.

'What's wrong with him?' I said. 'Is he sick?'

'Ssh!' they said. 'Just wait till he gets properly going.'

'Reg'lar circus,' Corporal Weemes said.

The howl died down and became split up into words. These, unintelligible at first, clarified suddenly into a shout: 'The rotten bastards!'

'He's off,' they said, shaking with laughter.

'Rotten bastards!' came the shout. 'I'll learn you, you rotten sods!'

'That's right, Kelly,' someone shouted from the bench. 'Brass the buggers up.'

'Company, shun!' came from under the blanket. 'Or-der—HUP! As you were!' He'd a good word of command, anyhow. 'Company will advance. Right-turn!'

'But is he asleep?' I said.

'Sure he's asleep,' Corporal Weemes said. 'He's dreaming, see?'

'Ab-out TURN!' Kelly shouted in his sleep. 'Pick up that step, you sods!'

'Proper sarmajor, ain't he?' they said in admiration.

'Look out, Kelly!' somebody shouted. 'Here comes the R.S.M.'

'B—— the R.S.M.' came back from Kelly. The fellows rocked with laughter, one nearly fell off the bench. 'That's right, Kelly boy,' they shouted. 'You size him up!'

'Where's Joan?' they asked him next. 'She's looking for you, Kelly. Joan! Wake up! Joan's his girl,' they explained to me.

'Joan?' Kelly mumbled. He was puzzled. The transition from parade ground to girl was too much for him to accomplish at a moment's notice.

'Yes, Joan!' they shouted, hopping about from foot to foot. 'She wants you, Kelly boy!'

Kelly kicked off all his blankets. One got entangled with his boots, but he got rid of it at last, muttering 'Rotten bastard'. But

the idea of Joan was evidently uppermost in his mind, and he murmured at the same time 'Darling'.

Sitting up, still asleep, with all his equipment on, he was revealed to be a small, dark lad about twenty. 'Joan,' he murmured, 'my sweet darling,' and kissed his haversack. The fellows were delighted. 'Go it, Kelly!' they screamed. 'Give her the works!'

Thus encouraged, Kelly became passionate. He embraced the haversack and, holding it tightly, climbed on top of it. He fell off and rolled over, hitting his head a whack on the door. But the blow did not fetch him to; he lay on his back murmuring 'Dearest love', and feeling for the haversack.

L/C Staines, N.C.O. i/c firewatching, came dashing in. 'Have I missed anything?' he asked. 'How long's he been started?'

'You're in time, Corp. Only got to Joan so far.'

'That's all right, then.' L/C Staines sat down by the telephone table, quite close to Kelly. He had a ringside seat. The boxing metaphor is justified because the haversack, formerly representing his girl, now apparently became identified in Kelly's dream with some mortal enemy. He clinched with it and delivered a short-arm jab to the straps.

'Go it, Kelly!' the chaps shouted. 'You got him groggy. You got him on the ropes. Go in and K.O. him, Kelly boy!'

Kelly did his best. He abandoned boxing for all-in wrestling and took a large bite of Blanco from the flap of the haversack. But the haversack in his mind had evidently hit back: he rocked sideways and slipped down by the wall, shaking his head. One of the blokes began slowly to count him out. 'One—two—three—four—.'

'Can't get up,' Kelly mumbled in a bemused voice, punch-drunk. He took a swing at the air and missed. He hit the door instead and laid his hand open.

'Surely that'll wake him?' I said.

'Don't you believe it,' one of the blokes said. 'Hammond hit him on the nut with an entrenching tool once and *that* didn't wake him. Nothing'll wake him once he starts on this stunt. He don't feel nothing, see?'

'What does he do when he's not asleep? Is he a boxer?'

'Not likely. Look at him daytime you wouldn't think butter'd melt in his mouth. Don't swear neither not unless he's dreaming.'

A stream of obscenity began to pour from Kelly as though released by these words. He'd been counted out and was now standing on his head in a kneeling position, as if about to perform a somersault. In this posture he appeared so funny that everybody again burst out laughing. But Kelly himself continued to swear, with his face close to the floorboards. It soon became apparent that his epithets were addressed not to anyone in particular but to the army in general.

'Doesn't he like the army?' I said.

'Dunno,' Corporal Weemes said. 'We have to chase him about sometimes. Bit of a dodger in his way. Lazy. Ain't a bad lad, not really, though.'

'Done any defaulters?'

'He done plenty of *them*. Just come off, matter of fact. Come off last night.'

'B—— the army!' Kelly was shouting in his sleep. 'S—— the jankers! S——'em all! Give me my civvy clothes,' he began to sing in a horrible toneless voice. 'Give me my civvy . . . clothes,' and the fellows slapped their knees and danced around him in delight. Then he went back to saying, 'B—— the army!' in a tone of such stridency that L/C Staines leaped up off his chair. Either his sense of discipline was outraged or else he was afraid the duty officer would overhear.

'Come on, Kelly,' he said in a voice of command. 'That's enough, lad. Come on, wake up!'

He grasped Kelly by the braces and swung him upright. With his other hand he administered a smart cuff on the ear. While delivered smartly it was still heavy enough to rock Kelly's head on his shoulders. But Kelly's eyes remained obstinately closed, and as if it were a reflex action his boot shot out at Staines's kneecap. Staines, an expert on unarmed combat, dodged nimbly back, releasing Kelly, but at the same time jerking his bayonet from its scabbard and tossing it on the telephone table. Kelly fell on his face and lay there, with blood dripping on the blankets from his cut hand.

'That's got it,' Staines said.

'The bayonet?'

'Yeh. He can be awkward sometimes. Remember that time, Williams, when he walked in his sleep? In Don Company?'

'Cor, don't I!' Williams said. 'I won't forget that not in a hurry.'

Fixed bayonet, all in his sleep, and come charging down the hut. We was all scared stiff. Then he come charging back again.'

'What'd you do?' I asked.

'We all got out right sharp and shut the door. After 'bout a quarter hour we looks in again and there he was sleeping sound, bayonet back in scabbard and all. Bloody rum bloke Kelly is, no error.'

'He's getting married next week,' another man said. 'Joan. His tart. Cor,' he chortled, 'I reckon she won't half get a surprise the first night, eh?'

'Getting married?' I said.

'Ah. Put in for leave today. Pass signed and all. He seen the Padre.'

'But damn it all he oughtn't to get married when he gets these fits. He ought to see the M.O. Or the psychiatrist.'

'Psychiatrist? Ain't that the bloke what they took Wiggs to, that they said was loopy?'

'Ah. Got his ticket and all, Wiggs did.'

'Reckon old Kelly'd get his ticket?'

'Nah, he ain't loopy. He's all right. Won't remember nothing about it when he wakes up.'

'Why don't you send him sick?' I asked Corporal Weemes.

'Wouldn't do no good,' Weemes said. 'He don't believe he does it, see? Thinks we're kidding when we tell him.'

Meanwhile one of the fellows had got hold of a broom and was dancing round Kelly jabbing him in the ribs with it, while Kelly, flat on the floor, made feeble efforts to snatch the broom away. But this comic relief roused a storm of protest from the others.

'Nah, let him be! Put the broom down!'

'It ain't fair poking him like that. Not with the broom.'

So the broom was abandoned. But Kelly now began to cry. 'They got me again,' he sobbed. 'They got me on another charge and I ain't done nothing! I ain't done nothing to nobody!' His body shook with sobs.

Immediately the fellows gathered round him. 'It's all right, Kelly boy. You ain't on no charge, mate. You don't have to take on,' and gradually Kelly was convinced. His sobs subsided and briefly he went through his whole repertoire, 'Sweet darling, rotten bastards, Company shun,' finishing up with a decisive 'B—— the army!'

Then his head fell peacefully back, and he at once began to snore. Two fellows came forward and covered him with his blankets again. The performance was evidently at an end.

'Will he be all right now?' I asked.

'Right as rain. Won't wake till *réveillé*. Unless the alarm goes.'

Corporal Weemes looked at his watch. 'Okay, lads. Ten forty-five. Pack it in now. Kip down.'

L/C Staines stood up and said in his parade ground voice: 'Come on. Next man on firewatching. Quick march!'

A steel helmet was clapped on, rifle snatched up, the door banged behind them. We all moved towards the beds and fairly soon we were sound asleep: even Kelly, dreamless now, huddled in his blankets with the blood drying on his cut hand, snoring quite happily to himself.

Only Corporal Weemes stayed awake, sitting up on the bench with a sixpenny thriller, because a Picquet Commander must not sleep on duty.

## AUGUSTUS JOHN FRAGMENT OF AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY—VIII

THE coppersmiths having left Marseilles for Italy I decided to follow their example. My first stop at Genoa was not memorable. I did not like the place or the people until I discovered a wine-shop by the docks where the patron and his seafaring customers were thoroughly unbusinesslike and friendly. Here I felt at home. At Siena I was moved by the slightly maladive Virgins of its school of painting and greatly attracted by Pietro Lorenzetti, an artist hitherto unknown to me. Proceeding southwards to Orvieto I paid profuse homage to Signorelli, Mantegna and the excellent wine for which that town is famous. Deferring Rome and the South for another occasion I turned northwards and arrived at length at Ravenna, where I lingered for some days. It was difficult to relinquish the Court of Constantine and

Theodora. The 'Tomb of Theodoric' seemed to evoke prenatal memories of Gothic heroes. These mosaics left an ineffaceable impression of semi-barbaric splendour. Padua of Giotto and the colonnades detained me awhile. Was it here I saw Piero della Francesca's majestic Christ rising from the Tomb? I think not. And so to Milan, where, as promised, I found my Gypsies. A vast assembly of them were encamped in a field outside the city. Work was in progress and the place rang with the din of hammering and the vociferation of the wild and arrogant crew. To my astonishment I found among them, not only my Marseilles friends but also those I had met with at Cherbourg some two years previously. In the evening a grand celebration was held in the principal tent. Seated cross-legged at the *scafidi*, or low table, upon which stood immense and elaborately chased silver flagons of wine, the chief presided. I was accorded the honour of a place beside him and other privileged persons. Young girls attired in their richest finery were called upon to dance to the accompaniment of accordions and the singing of melancholy songs of a distinctly Slavonic flavour. The dancers, without shifting their position on the carpet, agitated their limbs, hips and breasts in a kind of rhythmic ecstasy. From time to time the chief in his excitement would shatter his great German pipe, only to be handed another by one of the attendant young men. Deeply affected by the scene, I murmured to my neighbour, '*Kerel man te kamav te rovav*' (It makes me want to cry), and tore myself away with difficulty. As I left the field, less harmonious sounds were heard to issue from the tent. The young men had started to fight. . . .

It rained almost continuously during my stay at Florence, and when not visiting the Galleries I took refuge in a comfortable German beerhouse. The chief jewel of Florence, to my mind, is the *Primavera* of Botticelli. The figure of *Flora* and the three ladies dancing with interlocked hands, in their diamond-cut elegance, are lovely beyond compare. The artist, unfortunately, overcome, perhaps, by the religious implications of his theme, has not succeeded in investing the figure of the Virgin with an equal distinction, and she fails to dominate, as she should, her exquisite entourage.

Being now tired of idleness, however instructive, I was glad to return to Provence and set to work again in an atmosphere

less charged with the accumulated glory of the past. For at Martigues at least there are no masterpieces to overawe one. I was never tempted to join the school of 'La Venise de Provence', and the works of the native painter Ziem have left me unaffected.

Helen Anrep, kind even when most censorious, joined us for a time. Though I have always disappointed her, being somewhat earth-bound and unable to rise to the lofty stratosphere, where, without oxygen, she seems most at home, we discovered common ground in a sense of the ridiculous; and thus in a modest way were able to consort with ease, mutual delectation and, on my side, profit. For, feeling myself accursed, her strictures left me subdued but with an inkling at least of higher things beyond my grasp.

One day I was much interested in the arrival of a very dilapidated caravan, drawn by an equally dilapidated little man and a number of extremely thin dogs. Leaving his wheeled household on the *place*, he departed on some errand, and in the absence of its owner I found myself unable to resist the urge to peep into the interior of the van. I did so and found within—absolutely nothing. Rather ashamed of indulging my curiosity in this way, I hastily withdrew, and from a polite distance watched for the return of the individual whose privacy I had just outraged. He soon came back, furnished with some pieces of string with which he proceeded to reinforce the harness of his dogs. Leaving him thus occupied, I seated myself on the terrace of the Café du Commerce, in expectation of the reappearance of the mysterious traveller, for I guessed he would pass that way on the road to Marseilles. Sure enough a terrific barking and yelping announced the approach of the outfit, which, passing by at speed, soon disappeared at the bend of the road. My friend the butcher, who happened to be at my side, remarked, '*Une mauvaise tenue*', while shaking his head with disapproval. Being a butcher, and a stupid one at that, he was unable to see anything but the obvious. But this wasn't the end of it. When at Marseilles soon after I was in process of gustating a Pernod at the Bar Auzas, Place d'Aix, who should pass but my nomad of the dogs, but now by no means dilapidated! On the contrary, attired in a new and natty *complet*, with a coquettish straw hat and a pair of highly decorative shoes, he walked past jauntily, though seeming a little self-conscious, as superior people are apt to be in the presence of their humbler fellows. I shall never solve the mystery of this man's life. The

crazy and completely empty caravan, the starving curs attached to it by bits of string, their master, a Tatterdemalion, now transformed (by what magic?) into a *monsieur très bien*. . . . I was glad, at any rate, that the butcher's *mot* was not to be the last.

It was while living in Dorset that I painted Thomas Hardy's portrait. Through T. E. Lawrence I got into touch with the great man, and upon his consenting to sit, paid a series of visits to Max Gate. An atmosphere of great sympathy and almost complete understanding at once established itself between us, though the veneration in which I held Hardy impeded to some extent the natural expression of my response to his quite lovable personality. This on his side was counterbalanced by a gracious and delicate consideration which, while it put me at my ease, left me still fairly inarticulate. I wonder which of the two of us was the more naïve! He complained of the attentions of some of his less judicious admirers. One in particular hailing from the other side of the Atlantic, on the strength of a few minutes' interview, delivered himself in due course of a book entitled *Thomas Hardy's Universe*, in which his subject was described as soliloquising before the fire while smoking a succession of cigarettes. 'But', said Hardy with an expression of despair, 'I have never smoked a cigarette in my life' . . .

In the dining room two portraits faced each other on the walls. One of Hardy himself by an Academician, the other a representation of his first wife, the work one would say of some local and ambitious photographer. It displayed a fine figure of a young woman in summer dress, with luxuriant blonde hair hanging down her back. The second Mrs. Hardy, a gentle, slightly melancholy lady, was of a less florid colouring and style. I painted the poet and novelist of Wessex seated in his study, a room piled to the ceiling with books. These were all of a serious and philosophical character, many of them by French authors. Talking of literary matters, Hardy said as far as he was concerned 'lucidity' had always been his aim and was the determining factor of his style. He disliked obscurity in others and tried to avoid it himself. The portrait, through the good offices of Lawrence and Sidney Cockerell, was acquired later for the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Before parting, Thomas Hardy inscribed and gave me a copy of his *Wessex Tales*. After his death a committee was formed to decide on a form of

memorial to be erected to his memory. J. M. Barrie, Granville Barker, Mrs. and Miss Hardy and others, including myself, were present at a meeting in Dorchester. My own proposal was that a statue of 'Tess of the Durbervilles' should be erected on some point of 'Egdon Heath', with the profile of Hardy on the pedestal. I recommended Jacob Epstein as the sculptor. But this suggestion was turned down. I noticed the name of Epstein seemed to strike panic all round. I had ascertained that he was, as an admirer of Hardy, very willing to undertake the work. Hardy, apart from his fine head, was not of monumental build, and the decision of the committee to entrust the memorial to Eric Kennington, with the result of the seated and insignificant figure we see at the top of the High Street, Dorchester, was regrettable. We attended a performance of *Tess* at that town, and Hardy, hearing I was present, sent for me to meet him 'behind'. This I did, and was able to enjoy a close view of and an introduction to Mrs. Bugler, a Bridport lady who filled the title rôle. Hardy evinced a great admiration for the young débutante, who was indeed a very handsome creature. Flushed with success, she contemplated leaving her butcher's shop and making the stage her profession. Hardy, however, explained to me that, in spite of her great beauty and evident genius and the fact that her husband, 'though a good enough man, was quite inadequate', he didn't feel justified in encouraging her to take this step, 'for we know what actresses are'.... When a company of London professionals enacted the play at Max Gate with Gwen Ffrangcon Davies in the title rôle, Hardy was moved to tears; his only objection was that 'in Dorset we don't drop our aitches, you know'.

When I first ventured into the Hotel Restaurant de la Tour Eiffel at the top of Charlotte Street it was with some diffidence, for at that time it was frequented almost entirely by serious French bourgeois, and in this company I felt out of place. The restaurant was then kept by a man called Homer, whose name has remained on the door ever since. Only the presence of Arnold Dolmetsch and his family alleviated the sombre note of moderately big business which prevailed. When Rudolf Stulik took the place over, a gradual change in the character of the clientèle manifested itself. Stulik, hailing from Vienna, brought with him a suggestion of Strauss-like gaiety and *désinvolture*.

Himself the result of a romantic though irregular attachment, where, as he hinted, though I never believed him, the seductive charm of a famous ballerina had overcome the scruples of an exalted but unnamed personage, he looked, at any rate, sufficiently well-equipped by Nature for the part he played. This was before an alarming corpulence, a growing neglect of his person, with a progressive deterioration of his mental faculties had combined to efface the air of genial distinction and efficiency which made him for so long the most popular of restaurateurs. The 'Eiffel Tower' became under his ægis a favourite resort of poets, musicians and painters. The more adventurous members of the *Beau Monde*, too, were not above taking advantage of the good fare, the easy atmosphere and the possibility of a cursory and non-committal acquaintance with such personalities of greater or less eminence in the world of art and literature as were to be found there.

Stulik's *Livre d'Or* in course of time became a highly decorative collection of signatures, ranging from those of Royalty itself down to the most obscure *rapins* of Bloomsbury or Fitzroy Street. The Protean figure of Sickert sometimes lent a touch of old-world elegance conjoined with the hallowed tradition of artistic eccentricity; and his satellites of the Camden Town Group, Spencer Gore, Harold Gilman and Ginner, were to be distinguished in faithful attendance on the master. Dick Innes and I, though unconnected with Camden Town, were admitted to the group, and used to look in at the weekly meetings held at No. 21 Fitzroy Street of a Sunday afternoon, where the works of the members were to be seen. With, I think, creditable judgment, I there acquired a couple of early pictures by Gore, who was then on the way to become the admirable painter he, though so shortlived, found time to prove himself.

The industrious apprentice is a type to be admired rather than loved. In Spencer Gore's case, however, immense industry was coupled not only with a rare and ever ripening talent: he possessed in addition an amiable, modest and upright nature which elicited the deep affection and respect of those who knew him. Literature was intermittently represented by such figures as Roy Campbell, Nancy Cunard, T. W. Earp, Robert Nicholls, Arthur Symons, Ronald Firbank, Osbert Sitwell, Charles Duff, Dikran Kouyoumdjian, Liam O'Flaherty, P. W. Lewis (who decorated in the

'Vorticist' style an upstairs room), Noel Coward, Sean O'Casey, Roger Fry, etc. Sometimes in the afternoon a solitary customer might be observed in a corner to brood long over his port. This would be Herbert Asquith in poetic travail. Eugene Goossens, Mde Suggia, Cecil Gray, Sir Thomas Beecham, Philip Heseltine, Lady Dean Paul, E. J. Moeran, Constant Lambert, Stravinsky, and others from time to time struck the musical note, and the stage yielded distinguished delegates in the persons of Ronald Squire, Tallulah Bankhead, Viola Tree, Elizabeth Bergner, Margaret Bannerman, Serge Diaghilev, etc. Politics would not be forgotten in the presence of Ramsay MacDonald, Sir Archibald Sinclair, or Lord Birkenhead, nor High Finance overlooked if Jimmy Dunn could be depended on. Iris Tree, Lady Cunard, Christabel McLaren, Lady Diana Duff-Cooper, Cristina Casati, Dorothy Warren, Lady Ottoline Morrell, illustrated in equal degree Beauty, Elegance, and Rank. But who is this spirit-child whose gilt hair delimits an elfin brow? With agate eyes she smiles in malice to find herself among mortals, and her head, sculptured in alabaster, is balanced on a lily stalk. It is Aline, whom I used to call my 'changeling'. In contrast here is 'Chiquita', who suggests a Mexican origin and the dark abdominal laughter of the *Pueblo*; only this in her case has been stressed to a shriller note as if under the inflammatory operation of the beverage called *pisco*. One name recurs like the perfume of the sweetest flower, whose root, once planted in my heart, forever puts forth blossoms, though the fair gardener with her basket and hoe has long since gone away, Henriette. . . . Evan Morgan and Horace de Vere Cole contribute each in his way an agreeable touch of Byronic reprobation and panache, while Tony Gandalillas, Napier Alington, Peter Spencer and George Fitz George provide a *mondain* accent, reminiscent of Monte Carlo and the Jockey Club or worse. And Caitlin, of the tawny mane and wild blue eye. Attention! At any moment she may throw herself into the air and, revolving, land like a cut flower amidst the central bouquet. Nina Hamnett, the Sybil of Charlotte Street, would make her entry at any hour, purveying, with breathless excitement, the latest *canard*. In this variegated society the possibilities of Romance and Drama were by no means absent and, if I remember, were not left entirely unexplored; but on this point the waiters would be better informed

than myself and they, unfortunately, are dispersed. Let not the reader suppose that this restaurant was always crowded by such company: many a meal I have eaten alone, or almost alone, there, and they not among the least appetising.



It was Christmas Eve at Alderney Manor and we were preparing for the festivities of the next day, when a telegram arrived from Mde Strindberg appealing to me in the most touching terms to come and see her for the last time on her deathbed at the Savoy Hotel. With the greatest reluctance and misgiving, but on the advice of my wife, I set out on this Christian errand, on the strict understanding that I was to return the next day in time for our Christmas dinner. I arrived to find the sufferer still able to speak feebly, though I have no clear recollection of her last words. Overcome at last by physical and mental discomfort, and with a hurried adieu, I rushed from the room and down the corridor till I reached and entered the lift, setting it in motion just in time to escape recapture by my moribund interlocutress, who had leapt from her bed and, like a substantial ghost in a winding-sheet, came hard at my heels. I took shelter in the 'Eiffel Tower' after arranging for a car to convey me home first thing in the morning. But on reaching Alderney next day I noticed with consternation fresh tracks on the drive! The Austrian had stolen a march on me! To my immense relief, however, I found she had gone as well as come. She had arrived after her midnight expedition still in night attire, but accompanied by her maid, and, having made herself mighty affable to the family, had departed in peace. This almost miraculous come-back would have been more impressive had I not already had proofs of the surprising recuperative powers of this invalid, and one no later than the night before. I promised myself, as usual, to be less tender-hearted in future; but unversed in the ways of such a world, I continued to find myself at the centre of an infernal coil, where deception and credulity joined hands; flattery alternated with abuse and the frenetic manoeuvres of a distracted but not brainless woman, crazed with frustration and the lust for power, were rendered still more complicated by the shady complicity of menials. Such antics were bound to result

in ludicrous situations which might have been enjoyable had not the effect been so often compromised by periodical outbursts of excessive *grandeur d'âme*, ill-timed protestations of affection, and, at intervals, the inevitable and progressively tiresome repetition of the suicide *motif*. Nor was I spared physical threats and the menace of the law itself: for having had occasion to repel an impudent invasion of my studio by the use of a modicum of force, my opponent took the step of resorting to a firm of solicitors from whom I shortly afterwards received a document charging me with both assault and defamation of character! In spite of my horror of litigation and the publicity it sometimes entails, I had in self-protection no choice but to follow suit. Nothing came of the bluff except that inquiries set on foot by my lawyer resulted in information concerning certain past episodes in Vienna which from Mde Strindberg's point of view were best forgotten but which seemed to indicate that neither violence nor chicanery were anything new to her. Her dealings took on a dramatic and conspiratorial character which lent complexity and even a doubtful twist to the simplest transaction. Though it was impossible for me to prevent this *amateur* from acquiring a few panels and drawings from dealers, I always begrudged them, and she got none from me directly, I think. I refused to second her in an attempt to double-cross John Quinn and Sir Hugh Lane. Both these gentlemen showed themselves obstinately impervious to her claims on various works already bespoken by them if not paid for. There is no doubt I did receive some money, but according to such remnants of correspondence as I have been able to dig up, this seems to have found its way chiefly into Anushka's pocket when it didn't go back to her mistress's. One substantial cheque, unpresented and unendorsed, I have only just by chance unearthed. It cannot now be cashed, but at least it does provide me with one of my rare dates: Aug. 28, 1911.

In spite of these disturbances, life went on peacefully at Alderney Manor, but less calmly in London, where I had a studio in the King's Road. I was engaged then on some large decorations which had been destined for Sir Hugh Lane's house in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea. I had commenced them *in situ*, but annoyed by the constant intrusion of visitors who were invited to view the spectacle of Sir Hugh's private artist at work, I removed the canvases after a sharp passage with my employer and the

deal was off. One of the murals, *The Mumpers*, was acquired by John Quinn, and for years hung in the Coffee Club at New York. It is now in Detroit. Another large unfinished decoration which was to have hung opposite *The Mumpers*, to which I gave, provisionally, the unsatisfactory title of *Lyric Fantasy*, is now in the care of my friend Hugo Pitman, but since he left his house at Odstock it remains for the time being without an appropriate setting. A third, somewhat smaller composition, which I had christened *Forze ed Amore*, after undergoing continual alterations became gradually unrecognizable, and finally disappeared altogether. A few years later, after our disagreement, Sir Hugh Lane visited me at 28 Mallord Street, saw the former work, and on the spot offered to purchase it at a much enhanced price. I agreed, and we were friends again.

But the war had now begun, the 'Lusitania' was sunk, and with it Sir Hugh Lane. The picture industry in this country has never recovered from this hammer-blow, for Lane in his way was unique and irreplaceable. And so ended my one and only experiment in mural decoration.

Realizing my parental obligations, I engaged the services of John Hope-Johnstone as tutor to my sons. Already stuffed with book-learning, the capacity of this young man for the absorption of knowledge appeared to be limitless, for he never ceased to add to his library or deplete mine, and would plunge into a new subject with the appetite of a starving though fastidious gastronome confronted with some untried and legendary dish. The story is that he once set out from England for Baghdad, his only impedimenta a perambulator charged with books—and got there. The last lap from Damascus was the worst, he told me. It is doubtful if his pupils benefited as much as they might under the tutelage of a walking encyclopædia, but I certainly profited by this retarded but God-sent supplement to a scrappy education. Undeterred by a complete lack of 'ear', this remarkable young man, while with us, decided to add to his many accomplishments the mastery of the flute. This by sheer perseverance he succeeded in doing, though at some risk to his popularity among those within hearing; but was at last able to execute a lively Morris Dance with considerable accuracy and spirit. Later, Hope-Johnstone and Gerald Brennan, author of *Jack Robinson*, etc., took a house on the Sierra Nevada, and having stocked it with books,

lived there some years, though under great suspicion; for the natives, being illiterate, regarded this accumulation of reading matter as meaning one thing only—sorcery. They weren't far wrong in my opinion. I shall have more to say about this Spanish adventure, for I joined in it myself.

Another interesting personality now took up his quarters with us. This was Trelawney Dayrell Reed, the famous anti-aircraft pioneer, farmer, artist, poet and archaeologist. The event which entitles him to the first appellation, it will be remembered, occurred when, having failed by peaceful and regular methods to put an end to the use of his farmhouse as the turning point of the commercial flying races then being held in the neighbourhood, to the great discomfort and danger of his household, cattle and hollyhocks, he in a moment of desperation and with the object of drawing attention to an existence which had so far been ignored, seized his gun, and letting it off blindly was unlucky enough to perforate the wings of the plane, which at that moment, having completed the encirclement of his chimney-pots, was streaking back over the farm in the direction of the landing-ground. Fortunately the aviator, a well-known and brilliant performer, was untouched, nor was any vital part of his machine affected. Still, Trelawney was held up for attempted murder, tried at Dorchester Assizes—and acquitted by a jury composed mostly of fellow farmers, in opposition to the less merciful view of the judge. By this public-spirited act Trelawney claims to have put an end to the nuisance of commercial low flying. When shortly after the airman in the case locked with his competitor and both were burnt to death in an adjacent field, Trelawney only remarked, tactlessly I thought, 'Serve the b—— b—— well right.' I had already met Trelawney in London, where he went about in a Venetian cape and such hair as he had, worn long. He looked in on us one day for a cup of tea, and finding Alderney to his taste, stayed on for two or three years. He made himself helpful with the small farming operations we practised, and, what was more important, brought into our too primitive existence a salutary touch of the baroque. As we explored the countryside of an evening with a pony and trap we were in the habit of pulling in from time to time at the wayside inn, where, while the pony took a rest, we too refreshed ourselves, and at the same time gleaned from our chance encounters much

wisdom and entertainment. Trelawney was an adept at this pursuit, and though a stranger, his remarkable memory and flair in a very short time made him master of the geography, lore, and history of the country. Starting as an outsider, he quickly became an authority on these matters, and finished by knowing much more about the inhabitants and their affairs than they did themselves. Soon, too, he developed a proficiency in the Dorset dialect, so deep as to baffle the oldest natives. This may have been partly due to a remote linguistic infusion derived from his earlier memories of Cumberland. In the public bar Trelawney was a Prince in the manner of *El Greco*. His cavalier bearing, sonorous and racy diction; his attire, in style, an arresting combination of sporting and æsthetic motives, all joined to make up an outstanding figure, still further thrown into relief by the foil provided by an audience made up for the most part of dull, awkward and obsequious boors. He excelled at 'shove-ha'penny', and has even published a useful manual on this popular game. Now that 'darts' is all the rage, Trelawney again shows himself the Master, and is, I believe, unbeatable in this field also. When I introduced him to 'Joe' Pitt-Rivers, the two at once became close friends and were inseparable for a decade. 'Joe' made him Curator of the Pitt-Rivers Museum, which in Trelawney's capable hands was in process of complete reorganization when the unfortunate break between the two occurred. Their sympathies and outlook were in many ways similar. They shared a common interest in archaeology, and professed an equal dissatisfaction with the Deity, whom they frequently referred to with asperity and resentment as though He were some local bigwig such as Lord Shaftesbury, who had deliberately omitted to include their names on His visiting list. 'Joe', who fancied himself as the predestined leader of the New Order in England, with Tom Moseley as his lieutenant, has been, as we know, locked up, but Trelawney remains at large and employs his leisure in writing an account of the Saxon penetration into Wessex and the Thames Valley. He will be the first, and probably the last, to have located 'Mount Badon' by an irrefutable chain of reasoning, and now ensconced with Gildas, the Venerable Bede and Geoffrey of Monmouth, he proposes to follow up the publication of this magisterial opus by an exhaustive Life of 'King' Arthur in three volumes.

In my youth there were sights and sounds which now I look and listen for in vain. What has become of those outlandish and beribboned paladins who used to appear from time to time and majestically parade the streets of my native town to the shrill skirling of bagpipes as big as bullocks? (the bags I mean). Some of them, I noticed, without bags made just as much noise. I have not seen a dancing bear for years, nor heard from round the corner the ominous notes of the song which accompanies him as he approaches slowly with his escort of children. Whither has now gone that horde of turbulent gypsies from the Balkans I once met on Epsom Downs, who, beating great leatheren tambourines, sang wild ditties to the antics of enormous apes? At the Marble Arch I have witnessed what might be described as the last pitiful survival of the *Commedia dell' Arte* in a crude performance reminding one of Shakespeare at his worst but none the less endearing. Punch is dead and the Pipes of Pan are silenced. No strolling tumbler, juggler, cheapjack or strong-man interrupts for an hour of exquisite idleness the dull procession of our days; nor is there now much danger of seduction under the veiled regard of some queenly peripatetic who in appearance resembling the Virgin Mary in Flight, stops by the way, and in response to the exigencies of the imperious brat slung from her shoulder, obtrudes, without ceremony, a limpid azured breast. What shy band of Tinkers now pitch their lowly tents in the invisible green lane; still bearing with them, though despoiled, the classic stigmata of a forgotten world? In far-off Liverpool days I met the last one-man-orchestra, and him I had into my studio to draw. His music, however, is best heard in the more spacious theatre of the market place. Is this Art-form really extinct, or may we be gladdened yet by some self-sufficient Beecham of the future, operating with his unaided arms and legs what must be, for him, a completely satisfactory instrument or set of instruments, with, in attendance as usual, a questing and in comparison with the superb Maestro who precedes her, his somewhat dowdy partner? My smiling friend Antonio Deodati has certainly gone to his fathers along with his organ and monkey, and the strings of my own *Vieille*, or hurdy-gurdy, are now far gone in disuse and I think are beyond repair. The Charlotte Street district used to be visited by a strange company consisting of a girl and two or three fellows in motley, painted like clowns,

who sang and danced to the strains of a mechanical piano. The dark beauty of the girl, her flashing eyes and vigorous grace, set off by her fanciful attire, seemed to denote an alien origin and moved me powerfully. It was like a page from Heine, or a chapter, and even became what might be called a complete story though a short one. At that time I was immersed in the *Reisebilder*, *Florentine Nights*, *The Baths of Lucca*, *The Romantic School*. I saw much of Orpen. His Dublin drollery kept one laughing, and success had not compromised his innocence or vitiated his manners by the blight of calculation. Often we would meet to pass the evening in some music-hall, and sup later on lager and sardines, or Frankfurt sausages and sauerkraut at the 'Gam-brinus'. Sometimes Charles Conder and Leonard Smithers would entertain and disturb us with talk of Paris, Dieppe, Beardsley, Wilde, Verlaine, Anquetin. . . . Sometimes we joined the Meynells at supper at Palace Gate of a Sunday. The exquisite and fragile poetess presided with her less immaterial husband at an uproarious board of young. On occasions the 'Hound of Heaven' was sent for from the kitchen to show his paces for a limited period before dismissal. Francis Thompson had the appearance of a tramp but spoke with the voice of a minor prophet. I often visited the Rothensteins at Hampstead, meeting there Conrad, Hudson, Cunningham Grahame, and others. Conrad was a man visibly consuming himself in a passionate exploration of the hidden drama of life. One immediately 'took to' Hudson, a tall, angular, silent, birdlike man, but I was doubtful of Cunningham Grahame, the Scottish Hidalgo, dilettante, revolutionary, humorous Quixote. . . . His South American wife complained of the greenness of England: she was home-sick for the Pampas, and refused to listen to her husband's comic anecdotes. When Max Beerbohm entered, a subdued murmur of anticipatory applause greeted him. 'If you have tears, prepare to shed them now,' he seemed to say, but they were tears of laughter. This rare and scrupulous artist had passed unscathed through Oxford's fires, and those of the 'West End' alike left him with his native innocence and sense of wonderment undimmed. Only the careful purity of his vocabulary showed signs of enrichment by a few useful colloquialisms borrowed from the music-hall. Certainly Will Rothenstein's dinner-parties, on the mental plane at any rate, were more

than satisfying. One left replete in one sense, but yet, in another, as after an exquisite Chinese meal, ready to recommence. Some of the more experienced guests might have learnt to preface the feast by a copious 'high-tea' with, perhaps, a momentary call at the 'King of Bohemia' on the way. These precautions, by liberating the intellect, would encourage it to soar more readily to the austere and spiritual altitudes prevailing at Church Row. But for myself, as I always arrived speechless, endured in silence, and departed dumb, they would have been wasted.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Sir,

I think it would be hard to find anywhere a more brilliant short summary of the history of the universe to date, with some notes on the probable future of mankind, than the one provided for your readers by the unknown Archimedes.

But the compression of his work has forced him into a number of short cuts in argument, and several of these short cuts, it seems to me, run in the wrong direction. They run particularly wrong in section II, which is a section of argument rather than description.

No one who has ever been a Christian—even for a short time and under compulsion—will recognize that faith as one which 'implied that the affairs of human beings were manipulated by outside forces, good or bad. Men could seek comfort in the love of God and in the faith of an after life; or they could acquiesce in failure, either because God willed it or because they had been thwarted by malignant forces. . . . The forms of human society were accepted as divine and eternal. Change was impious.' Applicable to any of the Churches at some periods of their teaching, of Christianity itself this is not even a parody: it is a reversal.

Of both religion and art, it seems to me, Archimedes misses the point, by choosing to regard them solely as social activities. Of art he says: 'Only in a society where all are brought up alike and share a common heritage can we hope to develop a fully integrated art.'

The social worker may judge art by whether or not it is 'fully integrated'. To the artist this is as reasonable as to judge his paintings by whether the colours he used were made under Trade Union conditions. To the artist there is good art and bad art—and the bad art is just as likely to be 'fully integrated' as the good. Indeed, if we accept the argument of Edmund Wilson in *The Wound and the Bow*, the artist and his social maladjustment are inseparable, so that 'full integration' of the artist is the well-intentioned castration of an unruly man-child.

So, it seems to me, of religion. Archimedes flings his net, and entraps Church organizations, charitable activities, and Sunday observance. But all these were entrapped long ago. The idea of religion as the setting-free of a human mind or soul from the fury and confusion of worldly interests—through the deliberate strengthening of its inner powers and the control of its own limitations—is something he never treats of. It seems actually to be unknown to him.

His account of religion is shrewd, but shallow. His idea of art is something that would make a good show at the Paris Exhibition. I think the religious and the artist should ask some further arguments from Archimedes before abandoning the standards by which so far they have lived.

Strange too is the writer's idea of what he calls 'philosophy'. Philosophy, he says, has, with religion, been 'undermined for centuries by the more or less conscious hypocrisy which was needed to make them fit with an unjust class society.' What philosophy was undermined in this way? The main problem of philosophers since Descartes has surely been the investigation and limitation of the frontiers of the mind, and its relation with the external universe. Berkeley, Locke, Hume—down the main stream of English philosophic thought to F. H. Bradley—how have they been holding up the spread of Marxism through 'more or less conscious hypocrisy'? Yet they are already tried and condemned. They have been allotted their punishment—to be rewritten. 'The whole vast body of human knowledge accumulated slowly through the ages, and with embarrassing rapidity in the last century or two, needs to be worked over and revalued as the basis for the new society. This revaluation is long overdue.' It is not the textbooks, notice, that are to be worked over and revalued. It is the knowledge.

Only one page further on Archimedes shows how suited he is to such work of revaluation—and at the same time kicks away the whole prop and mainstay of his argument. He does it quite casually, in a sentence of six words.

He has made, as I think, a striking analysis of the state of the world today. He has carried the reader with him through the overturning of every kind of prejudice and deep-rooted belief. He has been successful by one thing only—the power of his closely-constructed, logical, reasoning. 'There is no absolute ethics, morals or metaphysics. What pass for these are the many times transformed customs of actual human societies.' Then comes the sentence: 'Even logic cannot be accepted uncritically.'

What does Archimedes mean by that? Why did he write it? One thing, he did not mean 'even *false* logic cannot be accepted uncritically'. Archimedes has, through many thousands of words, shown a capacity to put down his thoughts as he wishes them to be understood. Nor does he deal in platitudes.

The only meaning I can attach to these words is that the writer has already staked out for himself a vested interest in some one particular solution to the problems of the world—a vested interest like that he attributes to the bishops and the schoolmen. Every particular solution, as he knows well, can be attacked at some point, is liable to some telling criticism. If he is driven out of an advanced position by logic, he is preparing to reoccupy it by faith. Archimedes is constructing his second line of defence.

'Even logic cannot be accepted uncritically.' I had a curious illusion as I read these words. They seemed not to be printed on the page at all, but to be shouted up at me by a small figure with a rasping voice, spot-lighted, backgrounded with banners, to the applause of storm-troopers in boots.

TOM HOPKINSON

### FREEDOM OF NECESSITY

Dear Sir,

24th November 1942

Archimedes, like others before him (notably Mussolini and the frog in the fable) has discovered that as a virtue humility is altogether inconvenient and 'out of place', and through the medium of **HORIZON** he can now proudly claim to have put Truth in her right place at last as a Relative and not an Absolute.

But there may be scientific minds amongst your readers trained (lamentably no doubt) to adopt an attitude of humble respect towards mere factual Truth. And I am rather foolishly hoping that for their sakes you may in your next issue publish the known facts about our assistance to Russia, in reply to your contributor's statement that 'We have failed for eighteen months to assist the only Ally that can and has resisted the Nazis'.

Yours faithfully,

(signed) GEO. KNOWLES

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